

THE END OF
THE
BEGINNING.

LIFE IS LOVE AND LOVE IS ETERNITY

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The End of the Beginning.

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The

End of the Beginning.



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“Life is love, and love is eternity.”

THE END OF THE BEGINNING.

I.

A FRIEND OF THE DEAD.

“DO dead folks like to have flowers grow over them?” said the little girl to herself, as she sat on the edge of the stone table that surmounted the old Bexley tomb, and dangled her legs optimistically. Amoret’s own handful of whiteweed and buttercups had been plucked outside the mossy brick wall and rusty iron gate at the front of the churchyard; for her seven-year-old conscience had somehow guessed that even constant visitors should not take liberties in an enclosure of which, after all, the underground inhabitants were the proper owners. But her eye was caught by the solid green and red buds, plentifully bursting on the tangled old rose-bush just beyond

the tomb; while, a little farther off, she saw the waterless vase, the snow-soaked ribbon, the withered leaves, and the dirty white live-for-ever that lay on a last year's grave. It seemed clear that buried people did not wish to be forgotten all at once, and that they agreed with her in thinking flowers the prettiest things in any world.

Nobody ever put any flowers on the crumbling yellow marble of the Bexley memorial, or took the time to try to spell the letters of the inset metal tablet that commemorated the alleged virtues of Anthony, armiger, and Priscilla his wife. But the slab, resting table-wise on four carved pillars of not impossible height, was a favorite place for Amoret to play tea. One of the legs, to be sure, was suspiciously insecure, seeming to hang from the top rather than to support from beneath; and ever since a woodchuck and a subsequent rainstorm had visibly burrowed into the mysteries below, Amoret had not been untouched by occasional ideas of mortal collapse and confusion at her little banquets.

Sometimes she was all alone when she ate her bits of ginger-snap and apple, and drank sweetened water in economical sips from a tiny cup whose thickness was somewhat disproportionate to its height. Now and then she in-

vited Joan and Bob to share the festivities; but the lively Joan, being a little older, was afraid of graveyards, and told too many bugaboo stories, while Bob was only a boy, and therefore could not be expected to know that it was improper to eat a whole apple all at once, or to throw away his teacupful of sweetened water because it was too warm to be fit to drink.

Amoret had never been afraid of death, and always liked to come to the "death's-acre," — the funny phrase her grandfather had used the other day, when, pet doll in hand, she was starting out for an afternoon in this favorite haunt. Once, to be sure, she had seen a dead man in a box they called a coffin; and that box, after more or less singing and talking, had been buried in a neatly-cut hole in this very ground; now there was a pile of fresh dirt heaped over it, with a pine peg driven in at one end, because no gravestone had yet been set up. When she had been lifted in her grandfather's arms to look at the face of this old Mr. Woodcom, the tailor, as he lay in his coffin, it seemed to her that it was very white; and she noticed that his dickey was stiffer than usual and his scanty hair more carefully brushed, and that he had gone to sleep with his lips tight shut and his eyes a

little open at the bottom of the lids. Then they carried him out, and he never came back again to the shop where he used to work every week-day, or to the old-fashioned garden where he trimmed the bushes every Sunday. She had at first been puzzled by this failure to return, and still more grieved by the obvious thought that, six feet under ground, one could hardly find air to breathe, or water to drink, or a chance to walk, or light to read by, or flowers to pick. But old Mr. Woodcom was at least as well off as the poor little canary she had found dead in the bottom of the cage a month before, and subsequently wrapped in cotton and duly buried with more tears than anybody shed for the tired but not very amiable tailor. The canary, she was sure, could not be unhappy, with a blue ribbon round its neck, and its pink feet so prettily turned upward; and why should Mr. Woodcom complain of what was good enough for the little yellow singer? Besides, Amoret's grandfather had told her that the wielder of the scissors had gone "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest," — which phrase she duly memorized because it sounded pretty, and localized as descriptive of a fairy grotto underground, easily accessible to Mr. Woodcom, the canary, the Bexleys, and

other graveyard people, but having no external entrance.

So Amoret found nothing unpleasant in the graveyard, but many a joyous thing and sunny experience. It was fun to spell out the children's names on the smallest stones, and guess whether the boys and girls were having a good time now, and what they looked like,—if they were lively like Joan, or rough and rather selfish like Bob, or as fond of birds and flowers as she. Then, too, the enclosure was attractive in itself, and pleasantly situated. The old brick church at one end was ugly enough, but Amoret did not know it; and she liked to look at the slowly turning vane far up in the sky; to watch the pigeons flutter through the boards of the belfry, or to hear the bell strike the hour—which occurrence, bothersomely enough, was regularly at three minutes past the time when the minute-hand pointed straight up to XII. But everything in the gray and gently dilapidated old town of Bellwood seemed a good while ago, or just around the corner; so why should the official timepiece affect any superior or annoying accuracy?

Church, graveyard, and surmounting elms certainly made a place to please young eyes or old. The turf-y yard was a little beyond the

small bustle of the village, and it had no near or constant neighbor but the slow river that passed in a leisurely curve on its southward way. Amoret's grandfather, the old bookseller, who used to like to walk here of a Sunday afternoon, once solemnly said that the stream was a "life-in-death, like the procession of vitality toward mortality." Just what this meant was not apparent to Amoret's small brain, and it made the yard seem a little more shivery than before — until she saw the sunlight dancing on the waters under the pine-clad hill on the opposite bank, and heard the first thrush of the season call from a shady four-o'-clock nook still farther away.

Week-days, indeed, there used to be swift trains on the railroad that somewhat incongruously filled the narrow space between the graveyard fence and the river. Once Amoret was standing by the iron door of an old tomb at the eastern end of the yard, and the passing rumble of the flying wheels jarred its door so that it audibly rattled. Joan was there, too, and ran away with a scream, saying that she was sure the buried people were shaking it and trying to get out; but Amoret knew better, for she had often stood on the wooden bridge that crossed the tracks nearer home, and had felt the boards tremble in the increas-

ing roar of the coming locomotive. Sometimes, on such occasions, the smoke and the racket made it seem advisable to jump down from her perch on the bridge rails, over which peered her bravely determined little face; but usually she endured the coming of the train more courageously than, in her dreams, she ever could await the approach of the immitigable countenance that sometimes came on and on, nearer and larger and grimmer, until she awoke with a cry that brought grandpa to her bedside. This was Amoret's one horrid vision of the night,—shared by many a child, and sometimes half remembered when a weary man ends life and all by throwing his tired body and harassed brain beneath the oncoming engine whose headlight lures him like the moth to the fruitless flame. For the most part, however, Amoret's night was long and dreamless, unless, just at dawn, she had visions of some strange power of keeping herself afloat in the air by just wishing to do so,—a power she was sure was possessed by every one of the dead people who had gone to their underground fairyland after the uncomfortable preliminary of burial.

As far as the railroad was concerned, the people under the gravestones did not care for it at all, in Amoret's opinion; nor did most of

the faces that flew by in the car-windows give so much as a single glance at the tombstones, or the church-tower, or the pigeons, or Amoret and the flowers. Amoret, however, was rather glad that the railroad ran so near; for, after all, when she was tired of her tea-table on the tombstone, or of putting vexatiously big flowers in her doll's fluffy hair, or of watching the birds and wondering what they were saying, she liked to hear the whistle of the up-train, and to have a chance to run and see the business-like engine and its following of cars, all acting just as though they were the most important things in the world.

Children and puppies have a catholic interest in things in general; and life, to Amoret's happy little self, was so pleasant a thing that she was inclined to personify not only grave-dwellers and locomotives, but such trees or hills or houses as most struck her fancy,—windows, at any rate, looked just like eyes. Thus she had plenty of companions, and in the common fashion of childhood, she was so exceedingly busy all day long that at early bedtime she was very tired, but not half through.

One night, when she had climbed into her grandfather's lap after a somewhat unusually complicated day, she informed that individual

that the world was so full of things that she didn't have time to catch up. "You little rascal," said he, "when I hold you in my lap I have to carry a poet, a painter, an architect, a soldier, a playwright, an actor, a baby-tender, a preacher, a cook, a botanist, and the proprietor of a menagerie;" but the conglomeration of personalities was fast asleep, and missed the compliment.

To crowd the time the more, as Amoret soon found out, there were the four seasons and the twelve months, with their procession of beautiful things set right before the eyes of a New England child. In March the wind in the north and the sun in the south held pitched battles, and sometimes the early dandelion on a warm housebank got covered with two feet of snow. The first of April the holes in the river ice grew bigger, and the patches of water by the banks stretched wider; until at length, with crash and grinding and stately sweep, the ice went out and the spring freshet rose so high that it swept back into the cellar of grandfather's bookshop. Then Amoret would sit in the eastward window and watch the great ice-sheets go sailing down the strong current in the middle of the stream; while alongshore the lazier and reluctant cakes went grumbling and fighting like polar bears disturbed in their

sleep. And spring flew in as winter floated out, for then came the chipping-sparrows and began their monotonous, cricket-like song on the tree across the street; and the frogs piped at nightfall on the marshland of the Plains.

Sometimes May-day was lovely and sometimes it was shivery, but soon the May-flowers surreptitiously stole forth on Clark's hill, right on the heels of the belated snow, which still lay unmelted in dark hollows here and there, beneath the stumpy hillsides most liked by the pink and white blossoms. Picking May-flowers, thought Amoret, was like finding coins in dreams—first one by chance, and then more, and then a handful.

And June! Amoret thought God must have made June just for fun. There was more greenness than flowering, and never a fruit as yet; the world seemed just old enough to be rich and full, but not so old as to suggest any troublesome past. As for the future, if you thought of it, the idea meant nothing but the going on and on of such joy as each new morrow of early summer found waiting at hand. One small girl's head could not take it all in; but that head philosophized a good deal, though not for long at a time. The everlasting Why of childhood got its answers from within as well as from without; for

when Amoret was dissatisfied with replies she thought evasive or insufficient, she fell back on the right to put old truths into new theologies. Of all the creeds of the world a child's is not the worst.

Little by little, as she grew older, Amoret learned the names of May's, June's, and July's flowers, but she loved the blooms before she knew what they were called. Sometimes she made up names for them, especially when she found them "all by her lone," and loved them with the pride of original discovery. Wakerobin, and marsh-marigold, and Dutchman's breeches were good enough names, and she retained them; but at first she called violets "old-woman's blue dresses," after she had picked one to pieces and seen the two little legs in their tub; while bloodroot was "white-carpet," columbines were "red-tassels," and anemones were "wood-flowers." As the summer went on, the roses were the best loved, and the wild ones the dearest of all, though they persisted in reddening the northern wood-paths a month later than they ought, according to a little poem Amoret knew by heart. Then the homely dandelions were always at hand with all their miscellaneous uses: little piping trumpets, greens for the dinner-table, ringlets over the ears, and fortune-telling fluff

to be blown away with one prodigious blast of distended cheeks. And there was plenty of the whiteweed the farmers hated and the city visitors called daisies; of bluets all over the meadow; and of buttercups the children held under each other's chins to see whether they liked butter or not.

Once, on a long-memorable day in late summer, when her grandfather took her for ever so long a walk in the woods, Amoret found an Indian pipe, just like the one Mike Bryan smoked, only whiter, and growing in the shade of some big trees. She took it home and laid it away in cotton to keep forever, it was so pure and pretty,—only, alas! to find it, a little later, all black and clammy, like a corpse-plant indeed. But if blooms would decay, or shrivel like the flower-de-luces that used to be so pretty, more could be got next day, or next year, for Amoret at length attained to a knowledge of time's boon as well as its bane; of “by and by” as well as “never again.”

Overhead, in the time between mayflower and golden-rod, many a bird nested and sang. Up in the graveyard trees were robins, and orioles, and kingbirds and sparrows, while out in the open fields to the northward the bobolink “flew in scallops,” as Amoret said, and sang his delirious song on his way to his teet-

ering perch down among the tallest grasses and clovers. It was plenty of work for one small girl to watch the procession of songsters from the arrival of the first bold robin while snow was still on the ground, until, in late fall, the modest little flocks of nondescript flyers used silently to flit through the wayside bushes and flutter away together at the sound of an approaching step. They came from nowhere and went somewhere; "down south," said Bob, superciliously, in an expression as vague in Amoret's mind as would have been the "land east of the sun and west of the moon." More methodical were the wild ducks, that migrated in a business-like V with some strong-minded leader at the advancing point.

To Amoret there was a special charm about the high-flying birds, such as the chimney swallows that came out of the big chimney of the old academy on cloudy days or at sunset time. How they skimmed, and swam, and darted, and turned! And then at late twilight they all formed in a great ring that slowly circled above the square top of the yawning brick flue, until one broke away and darted down into the sooty monument, followed by two or three, and at last by the whole ring that swiftly poured in until every bird was out of the air, and it seemed as though the whole

chimney could contain no more, but must be all wings and flutter and chatter.

It would take a book to tell of everything that Amoret saw as the year went by; once she began to make such a book, but her slow printing got no farther than the top of the fourth page, with nothing said as yet about the long drought of that melancholy August, when the forlorn air was full of smoke from the burning Canadian woods, and the sun hung in the murky sky like a great copper pot, and all the little girls were sure something awful was going to happen; or the hot day in middle September, so swiftly followed by a premonition of coming frost; or October's red maples and purple-brown oaks; or November's leafless trees and six-pointed crystal stars falling on your sleeve at Thanksgiving time; or December's snow-fort; or the old horse on the river in January, walking to and fro to plow the cutter's lines on the two-foot ice. And then there was that wonderful sleigh-ride in February, when the moon was full and every twig and stone and sweep of crusted snow was covered with a glassy coat of pure transparency. As the sleigh-bells jingled past her summer haunt in the graveyard that night, Amoret looked through the glittering rods of the iron gate, and

thought the old stones prettier than ever in their moonlit glory. She was rather glad, however, to be safe at home, by the freshly kindled fire, when her grandfather told her an old story of his boyhood days, of which this shining night had reminded him.

“ Well, little lass,” said he, “ it was many a year ago, late in the winter, that this river behind us lay as still and white as it does to-night. It no longer carried any boats on its swift current down to the sea, or stopped to play in quiet nooks with the drooping boughs that hung over its edges. Surly old winter, you see, had looked at it, and just his glance had buried its strength and its playfulness under a coat of ice, and then had spread a blanket of soft snow on the top. So, for the time, what used to be a highway to the ocean seemed just like a part of the solid earth, or, rather, one great long bridge, which was a comfort to those who lived in the houses scattered on the hillsides along the river. The farmer and his wife could go to the store, — where he sat smoking and spitting and talking politics, while she traded butter and eggs for alpaca or bombazine, — without having to drive all the way round by the old wooden bridge.

“ So the new highway was covered with

straight or crooked paths, all tending, like a section of a big spider's web, to one point: the little village that hugged the steep hillside on the west bank of the river. The youngsters had sleighing parties on the ice, and the elder folk of pious minds rejoiced in a short and easy way of getting to meeting on Sundays.

"But that Saturday afternoon in late February it seemed as though all weathers came together and flouted each others' faces."

"What does 'flouted' mean?" said Amoret, with her head snugly tucked in her grandfather's elbow.

"Oh, made fun of each other," said he. "At any rate, it dripped, and rained, and sleeted, and snowed; it smiled in sunshine, wept in showers, and roared in great gusty winds; until, late at night, there hung icicle-spears from the stiff arms of the trees that had got all tired out with their waving to and fro. Then something happened down on the frozen river, unbeknownst to the villagers, whom the freezing wind had driven close to their kitchen stoves and sent pretty early to bed.

"The night grew darker and darker, and the wind roared louder, while thicker and faster fell the sharp sleet that cut like needles. And just think of it! All alone with the winter weather, trying to cross the river, was a with-

ered and bent old man. Staggering along, he had to stop every half-dozen steps, to catch his breath, and to hunt for the path that grew harder and harder to find and keep. Getting a glimpse of a light in one of the houses on the hill, he would stop and call for help: a hopeless, dreary call that hardly served to make any louder the shriek of the blast that took it from him. His hat was gone, and his poor thin gray hair was whisked about in the wind; and his torn old coat flapped round him, threatening every minute to fly off in the darkness. Oh, dear! As he went dragging slowly along, shivering in his rags, falling again and again, his face bleeding from the sharp cut of the sleet, the old fellow would have been a sorry sight, if anybody had been there to see.

“But the old man had with him a friend, the friend that had broken his wife’s heart; the friend that had scattered his children among strangers; the friend that had ruined his life; the friend for whose sake he had given up love, honor, happiness, and who had now driven him, a homeless wanderer, out into the night and the storm. This friend he pressed now and again with eager lips, or hugged closely with his stiff, blue fingers and aching arms, while the storm grew wilder, and his own little

strength failed more and more with each icy gust."

"Why didn't his friend help him?" said Amoret. "I think it was real wicked."

"You'll see," said the story-teller, coming back to the intelligence of his hearer.

"At any rate, as he stumbled and picked himself up again and again, alone with his jug in the fearful night, he kept muttering all the while. What did he think, little girl, if he could think, and what did he say, when at last, with a sigh of relief, he sank back to rest a little? Perhaps, like Falstaff of old, 'a' babbled of green fields.'"

"Was his friend nothing but a jug?" queried the wide-awake listener. "And who was Falstaff?"

"I'll tell you sometime," said he; "one story at a time.

"As the night wore on, the storm raged itself out; the wind sank to a sort of little moan; and the sleet became just a cold, dull, straight pouring rain that froze as it fell. After midnight it stopped, and the blast carried all the clouds away, leaving the air so clear that the shining stars looked down as if all polished new, and a deep breath was like a drink of cold water fresh from some woodsy spring.

“When morning dawned you never saw such a pretty picture. Of all the lovely things in the world: the bright yellow-green mistiness of budding leaves in spring; the dark, rich luxuriance of summer; the gorgeous colors of autumn; the pure white of winter; shining sunlight on a quiet sea; or the awful beauty of a mighty storm, none could be so unearthly as the one that came that February Sunday morning. It was just as though you had been suddenly transplanted to a new planet where there was no warmth, no color, nothing but clear, cold, glittering purity. Why, hills and fields and river lay smooth and white, with millions of little sparkles of light on the icy crust; while every tiny twig of every bush and tree, all snug in its perfect coat of ice, looked as if crusted with diamonds. The whole world was one great jewel that lay flashing and glowing in the rays of the morning sun.”

“Was it prettier than to-night?” said Amoret.

“I’m afraid it was,” candidly said her grandfather.

“I just don’t believe it,” retorted the incredulous agnostic.

“At any rate,” he went on, “the next thing you noticed was the sound of the church bells, — thin, and cold, and clear. Far away the

circles of sound spread in the rarefied air, till over in 'the gully' [“I know where that is,” affirmed Amoret], where Sunday was hardly noted as it passed, they sounded their call and their wail [“I know that, too,” said she]:

“‘Come to church — come to church — come to church;
They won’t come — they won’t come — they won’t
come.’

“A good many did come, however, even from a long distance, over the glare of ice. The horses were sharp-shod, and the day so glorious that everybody felt a longing to go out into the crisp air. So half an hour before the time for service there was quite a crowd in front of the meeting-house. They came in all sorts of queer old sleighs, well bundled up, — the men’s big mufflers keeping out the cold, and the women’s green veils the intense light. The village people, too, were getting ready for meeting; and the mothers, having washed dishes and faces, brushed hair and hats, and found mittens and goloshes for all the rest of the household, were taking a quiet minute for themselves.

“All at once, a little quiver of excitement was spread through the village by the announcement made by the many small boys who had their faces glued to the window-

panes, that an ox-team was coming up the hill. Such a Sabbath sight was n't common in that old-fashioned community, and so every one wondered what it could mean. And folks wondered still more when, as the team came nearer, they saw the slow oxen drawing a woodsled with something on it covered by a horse-blanket. As it came nearer, the men found they had business that called them to the front gate; but those who asked, 'What ye got there?' only received for answer from the walkers beside the team: 'Ye'll see at the meetin'-house.'

"When the team finally got there, and the men lifted their queer burden and placed it on the great horse-block, those who came behind could see a sudden stir among the folks already gathered. They moved rapidly to and fro, and pointed, and asked eager questions that no man could answer. All that anybody could say, was: 'We found him on the river, and we brought him to meetin' to see if anybody knowed him.'

"So, when each new-comer got to the edge of the crowd, he hurried out a 'What is it?' and got for answer a silent gesture toward the centre of the group, while the bystanders fell back and opened the way for him to see a sight he never forgot. Why, ever since, the

story of that Sunday morning has been told and retold, just as I have been telling it to you,—how some went right up to it, while others eyed it fearfully from a distance; and how the old minister, baring his white head in the chill air, said: ‘Dear friends, let us pray here, in this awful presence, that we may all be saved from the power of the dreadful habit that has brought this poor stranger to so sad an end.’ One little chap, whose mother tried to prevent his seeing it, caught, round her skirt, just a glimpse with his great gray eyes, and he can see it yet. There, before the meeting-house door, lay a ragged old man, his gray hair spread round his head like a halo, and his thin old arms clasping a jug close to his shrunken body.

“Who he was, whence he came, whither he was going, nobody knew. But surely this forlorn old drunkard died as no other has ever been known to die: for as he lay there on the hillside, and preached a never-to-be-forgotten sermon, his wretched body was hermetically sealed in a coffin that glittered clear and pure in the brilliant sunlight; a coffin as transparent as air, as cold as death—a coffin of ice!”

As the old man finished his story he sat in silent thought, and looked at the quiet little flames that wavered over the half-burned sticks

of the open fire; for he had been one of the small boys who saw the vitrified body years agone.

At length his thoughts came back to the serious little face before him, aglow in the firelight; and he wondered whether he had been thoughtless in telling the child so gruesome a tale. But just as he brought back his wandering thoughts, and turned to Amoret with a pleasant smile on his thin old face, and was about to say, "Don't grieve, lassie mine; it was ever so long ago," she anticipated him with slowly spoken words: "Was n't it lovely, grandpa? for just as soon as he died he knew all about everything!"

II.

A BOOKSELLER'S ROOF-TREE.

A MORET WENTON, child, had her home with her grandfather, Thomas Welby, bookseller. Her father, who bore the resonant name of Montague Outerbridge Wenton, had been a genius or a ne'er-do-weel, according to the bias of those who commented on his brief career. The antiquity of his family had become a certain attenuation in himself, so that its ancient power in politics or in large landschemes fluttered but fitfully in his year or two of painting, his briefer study of the principles of symphonic composition, and his invention of a portentous rapid-firing cannon, which the government was never wise enough to adopt. Finally, for the last few years of his gentle and blameless life, he had actually earned his living as a designer of patterns for oil-cloth carpets, to which utilitarian product he brought a cheery enthusiasm that perhaps was the paternal precursor of his little daughter's love for things in general.

Montague Wenton and Alice Welby had been village playmates and school-fellows; they had always loved each other, and they had married because neither could imagine any other possibility. The happiness which followed their marriage was but the continuation of what had preceded it. Poverty, which both had known before, was the pleasanter when shared; and the first swift grief the young wife ever knew was her husband's unlooked-for death. One of the twin demons of the New England climate seized him unawares, burned his little body in quick and immitigable fire, and then laid it in the Wenton family burying plot, where it was soon joined by that of wife Alice, drowned in a lonely and woeful riverside ramble by a mishap that forever forbade her father to hear the name of Ophelia without a tear.

Of all this Amoret remembered nothing and heard little. Her present was lovely, her grandfather lovable; that was enough. In this world of death it chances not seldom that an orphan is left in the care of a mateless and childless grandparent — with ample opportunity for indiscretion and ill influence on either side. But in this instance the dangers seemed minimized from the start. Poetic babes trail clouds of glory as they come to earthly

life; other infants suggest mist-banks more fuliginous, and a pre-natal abode less benign. Amoret was simply a natural little child, with the merits and faults that must ever go with childhood. Like a little transcendentalist, she accepted the universe, and the sun, stars, rivers, fields, birds, and flowers took her into their honorable company, at least as a harmless and agreeable ephemeron.

As far as her grandfather was concerned, half the griefs and disappointments of sixty-five years seemed cancelled by this last gift of the good God.

If bookseller Welby had been more eccentric, he would hardly have been a wise guardian; had he been less so, he would have been commonplace. Everybody knew he was unlike other Bellwood people, and therefore was to be allowed to go his own gait. Those who thought him chary of speech admitted that he was scrupulously just in his few words; and regrets that he so seldom went to church — for the small congregation of his own faith had dispersed some years before — were not made more acrid by any accusations of misdealings in his little business affairs. Some elderly church-members of his own age called him a mere moralist; but on the whole, the community was inclined to blame him chiefly for

not keeping a larger assortment of illiterate trifles and Saturday storypapers.

Mr. Welby and his shop had grown old and poor together. He was tall and thin, with large ears, high cheek-bones, and firm and clean-shaven face. A fringe of soft white hair stood out at each side of his bald head, and a perfectly straight and slightly thicker growth fell to the top of his coat-collar behind. Heavy eyebrows half covered the outer corners of blue eyes that sometimes twinkled and sometimes glared, but more often were of a merely negative character, while the lower lip of his broad and straight mouth protruded a little because of imperfectly-fitting false teeth. Other invariables, in his outward man, were hexagonal spectacles, usually on the top of his head; a worn broadcloth coat with a zigzag cut at the lapels, and sleeves that made up in length for what they lacked in circumference; linen that was sometimes frayed, but always scrupulously white; and a stock and dickey of such elongated and inflexible perpendicularity as seemed in themselves to secure an unswerving conscience.

All his life had been spent in the needlessly large building he now occupied as shop and home. Once it had been filled by a printing and publishing-house of local magnitude, in

the days before book-making became a metropolitan industry. Many painstakingly manufactured things had gone forth from these old brick walls: an almanac every year, divers moribund newspapers, law reports, some school-books, and a few old classics in verse and fiction. Thomas Welby had been office-boy, typesetter, and salesman in turn; and when the process of dwindling and elimination had left but the bookstore,—when the old press was abandoned and the types sold and the lone bookbinder had departed, the middle-aged survivor moved his household effects into the second story of the half-deserted warehouse above the river, and continued to sell books, and slate-pencils, and paper, and a stray magazine to such buyers as still chanced to come to what had once been dignified as Number 1 New England row.

This combination of shop and home was two stories high, with a pair of dormer windows in its steep roofs in front and rear, and huge chimneys set in the open southern wall. The immediate and inner world of Amoret's childhood and of Thomas Welby's age was accordingly bounded on the north by Number 2, on the west by the street, on the south by the slope to the town wharf, and on the east by the dilapidated wharf itself, with the

lazily treacherous currents of the sparkling river just beyond. Kitchen, sitting-room, and bedrooms took but part of the rambling spaces of the upper stories, while the high basement was big enough for a play ground. Indeed, the whole establishment gave Amoret the constant zest of possible discoveries of almost any sort, — pictures, type, ink-rolls, old books and newspapers, and discarded personalia of many kinds; though it was for the most part neat enough, the ancient grime of its typographic days having become a harmless mahogany tone with the lapse of time. The book shop itself, of course, occupied the front on the street, its floor being a foot or two below the impressive inscription chiselled into the stone of the foundation wall on the wharf alley: "Height of water April 4, 1811." Its large front windows were closed at night by thick wooden shutters; and the huge key-hole of the solid front door, with its sober and much-polished brass, suggested ancient and solid respectability. Outside the door, in pleasant weather, stood a little portable case of bargains to attract the eye of the passer; the contents of the shelves being graded to fit all purses, from the two-dollar to the five-cent capacity. There were the superannuated and dog's-eared school-book; the worn liturgy,

with the former owner's name still unerased; the heavy treatise in polemical divinity, once read by patient and pious eyes, now covered with thicker dust than rests on its own brown leaves; the forgotten book of verse, that not even duty made pleasurable to any one save its writer; stray and shabby volumes, that once purported to be Keepsakes or Friendship's Offerings. Here and there, however, was some piece of early printing, or young sprout of American literature, which tempted the eyes of such bookish loiterers as occasionally visited the old town, or of Mr. Welby's few resident patrons. For the most part, however, these old books were patiently carried out in the morning and back at night, with few depletions of the shelves, which came to seem almost fixed furniture to their patient proprietor.

Within, besides volumes of the same sort, and more imposing piles of the complete works of ancient theologians ("the set, 20 vols., sheep, \$3"), and divers relics of the former publications of the firm, there was a due array of well-chosen books by standard British and other authors, which, if they were seldom sold, the intelligent dealer declared should never be lacking if anybody asked for them. A book-store, he averred, was the intellectual ther-

mometer of the community, and its owner a missionary of wisdom, a purveyor of brain-food, as well worthy of support as the minister or the butcher, and as much bound to deal in honest wares. But he was used to leading a forlorn hope; the greater part of his modest gains came from pens and ink, writing-paper and wall-paper, sealing-wax and notebooks, slates for little folks, and legal blanks for their parents. Pennies were as needful as dollars in his scanty trade; and he made the tiniest sales with the kindly grace and the scrupulous care, though hardly with the inward pleasure, shown in the transfer on some rare and happy day of a sheep-bound *Federalist*, printed within these very walls, or of that old-time typographic marvel of the young nation, *Barlow's Columbiad*.

Most singers do not write songs, few actors invent plays, and bookseller-authors are as rare as *Samuel Richardsons*. But Mr. Welby had his one little secret: he was writing a book. Not a soul in the world knew it, not even *Amoret*, though she sometimes saw him go to the old many-drawer'd desk in his own room upstairs, take out a red-backed manuscript volume, write a few words in it, and then sit long in thought before he put it back into its place. Forty years had it been

a-preparing ; for its author deprecated modern hurry, and held the whimsey that minds ripen ; that age is fruitage rather than decay ; and that men talk and scribble too much and think too little. Accordingly he became critic rather than creator, and had, as toward his own possible volume, a mind curiously divided between intense pleasure in its slow composition and an unwillingness to inflict upon a patient world even one more pair of book-covers, though nobody might perchance turn them.

Mr. Welby's manuscript, then, was a *magnum*, yet *parvum opus*, — a record of *personalia* and *penetralia*, as he said to himself, when, as often happened, he fell back upon the scanty but serviceable stock of Latin he had got in his boyhood days at Bellwood Academy. On its first leaf was written, in large letters, —

“THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.”

with this motto just below : —

“Hamlet, Act II. Scene 2.

Pol. What do you read, my lord?
Ham. Words, words, words.”

Here, at least, if no winged words, were things that their writer had thought for himself, not read in others' pages, — things devout and

sarcastic, monitorial or reflective, yet never, he hoped, frivolous or untrue. Every man, he reasoned, knew himself, plus and minus, best of all; and so, in a way, he had a right to make a book, if but for his own eyes.

The foreword was this: —

I give you the world, said God. Throw it away, said Satan. Perhaps, said man.

And among the entries in the earlier pages were these sentences: —

Humanity rhymes with vanity.

Lovest thou art? Develop thine own character, for it is the only art-product thou canst carry hence.

This is the problem of the universe: What is the reason of advantage?

Freedom to choose the good is the greatest gift the Unknown has made to man,—a gift worth all the woe that is born of the choice of the bad.

It takes a lifetime to learn the meaning of one word in the schoolboy's Latin grammar: "satis."

And so the life of the little household ran on. Every morning, soon after the sun had risen above the tops of the tall pines on the hills east of the river, appeared Mr. Welby at the front door of his shop, wearing the old Panama that surmounted his head winter and summer, save when it was replaced by an

ancient silk hat as he took his walks abroad. Down came the iron bars that held in place the wooden shutters of the windows; off the door fell the similar protections to its old-fashioned glass panels; out went the cases of books on the sidewalk; and then was put into the window any attractive new volume, or bibliographic rarity, or pleasing picture, or standard magazine. Meanwhile breakfast was got by old Nancy Lee, who came in from her neighboring home to do the morning work,—Mr. Welby and Amoret prepared a simple supper for themselves,—and then Amoret, in earlier years, sat down to study by herself, or later set out for the village school or the academy. Surrounded by books, she had learned to read almost intuitively, getting her first knowledge of A, B, C from a big volume of type-founders' specimens of fonts. It was fun to pick out the different shapes, to connect them with names or sounds, and then to discover that the printed things could be put together in words, just as could the different noises she made when she spoke. So, at four years, Amoret could read her verses in her little Bible, to and fro with her grandfather, in the morning prayers that always began the day. Then both knelt for a collect or two from the red-edged volume that some Bellwood people

called heretical and others a caricature, but which probably would have passed muster with Jesus or Paul, and surely would nowadays be called a rather conservative manual of catholic Christianity. Mr. Welby was pious in his own way; he did not talk religion outside, either for attack or for defence; he fought his soul-battles by himself, and then tried — at least so he thought — to be negatively pure and positively helpful. The founder of Christianity, in the bookseller's view, had established the world-religion because, more clearly than anybody else, he had perceived that hypocrisy is the comprehensive vice of man and self-sacrifice his ultimate virtue.

Amoret's education took the gentle life for granted, other things coming to her as vulgar surprises; as when, for instance, she beheld a casual dinner guest reach half across the table to help himself to a boiled potato with his own fork. So it was with the bad things she heard on the street or at school; angry words, tittle-tattle, calling names, swearing, or the mention of things nobody ought to say. Her grandfather, and her best-liked teachers, and the old ladies who gave her figs, fell into none of these things; they came to her ears after she had got used to better manners; and so they seemed but deviations from the ought-to-be.

Two things puzzled Amoret, however, and she soon found, with no little sadness, that they were going to bother her whole life. One was the way in which she was sometimes naughty and knew it all the while; the other was the large number of folk in the world who were unlike her grandfather, or the old retired minister who used to come to see him, or gentle Miss Annabella More, with the gray curls on her temples, and the Brazil-nuts in her pocket, and the mitts on her hands, and ever so many pretty poems in her memory. If everybody were good and happy and never hurt or shocked one, what an improvement it would be! Once, when Amoret was a tiny child, and her grandfather was carrying her up stairs to bed, the flickering candle threw a black image on the wall, and the little girl exclaimed, "Shadow," — the first word she ever spoke; and so she found that light always makes darkness in this world of ours.

On the whole, however, she was happy, very happy, but chiefly on account of her loneliness; it is easier to manage a private paradise than a public one. Yet Amoret was not selfish, she was sorry for things long before she learned to construe *sunt lacrimæ rerum.*

As years went on and Amoret looked back on childhood, she was never foolish enough to

call it the time of happiest days. No woe of manhood or womanhood, she declared, is worse than the boy's or girl's sense of immitigable misunderstanding by others; and Amoret, when she was a little girl, was sometimes misunderstood.

III.

THE JOY OF LIFE.

ONE summer afternoon, a dozen years beyond the days of her playtimes in the old graveyard, Amoret sat on Hunger Hill. She was still, as of yore, the friend of the dead ; she could not believe that, in a universe whose every atom tingles with force, the soul — noblest result of all — could in any true sense die. But she loved the dead because she loved life and living ; because Nature's supernal beauty and unending opportunity seem to bind here and there together, and to make a single tense of was, is, and shall be.

That day the soft June sun fell on the long slope of the hill ; bees hummed and butterflies flickered in a gentle air that disturbed not the freedom of their wayward motions ; and the grass had a good time in its growing. A half mile away the cool river swept along in a leisurely curve, while far to the west the White Mountain peaks rose skyward in aspiration, the while their lower slopes covered the land

in benediction. In its early summer loveliness the world was more smiling than solemn, and its present beauty and mere enjoyableness left little room for thought; to be was enough. Even the New England conscience is sometimes lulled or lured away from its dreary habit of introspection, and is content to exist, like Nature. The brightness of the afternoon light, the flicker of the distant water, the good smell of pine trees, warmed by the steady sun and the mild air, promoted a sense that combined delicious laziness and poetic alertness. As for Amoret, her philosophy had always been optimistic enough; and to-day, for the very frolic of life, she sat singing to herself a little making of her own:—

Time and space began a race, all on a dateless day;
Run they yet, the goal is set, but ever moves away.

While Beauty sat thus on the hillside, amid all things sweet, up came Youth with a cheery “Good-afternoon, and good luck to my good old friend!”

Beauty, in sufficiently truthful word, was Amoret, and Youth was Robert Rodney, New York artist, the roistering and selfish boy Bob of the times of play-tea on the churchyard slabs. Years had gone since Amoret last saw him, for they had parted as school-children when Rod-

ney went away to study art in nobody knew what European galleries. Yet here again, unmistakable and instantly to be recognized, were the cheery face, the curly mass of light hair, the well-knit sturdiness of active figure, and the ringing voice of yore. Amoret jumped up, tumbled some flowers and leaves out of her lap, and ran toward him in quick happiness, with no more original or rhetorical welcome than "Why, Robert Rodney, where did you come from?"

"Everywhere and nowhere," said Robert, as he pulled his cap from his bright head, and returned Amoret's warm handshake with a new desire to make the hearty ceremony as long as possible, and a sudden thought that he never would have dreamed that the tomb-stone chit would grow into a being so picturesque. "Everywhere, for I've trotted over half Europe since I saw you, and nowhere, because I'm turned out of one studio and am going to move into a bigger one;" and meanwhile he continued his inventory of the details of the figure before him, as though she had been a model. But Amoret—though she instinctively saw that Bob was as handsome as ever, had lost his freckles, had gained politeness without losing frankness, and that his unquestionably pretty hair had concluded not to

be red — was so sincerely and spontaneously glad to see him that she really gave her whole welcome to the individual and not to his accidents. It was too good to be true; here, already, had been this lovely day and her happy dreams, and now came an old playmate, with nobody knew how many bright stories to tell of the world that never gave Bellwood a single thought.

“ Dear me,” said she, “ so I’m a good old friend; you shouldn’t twit on the facts of age.”

“ I know how old you are,” said he, “ nineteen this spring; that’s the good of coming home again. In Paris, nobody knows anything about age, anyway; and in New York every woman subtracts x , the unknown and inconstant quantity, from the family Bible record.”

“ Do they have Bibles in New York?” queried Amoret. “ Well, a citizen of the United States, ‘ætat. 23,’ as our old tombstones used to say, ought to know better than to laugh at woman’s foibles;” and she sat down on a little knoll of dry moss, while Robert took for his seat a neighboring rock. “ Men are every bit as sensitive about their age as women are, and as vain, too.”

“ Oh, but you ought to see some of those careless artists and poets on the other side;

sixteen and sixty are all one to them, and a dress coat or a flannel shirt."

"As artless, I suppose, as the Oregon bard who wore cowhide boots in London parlors, and insisted on sleeping in a buffalo-robe; there's nobody so artificial as the man who is always declaiming against the conventional. It's easy enough to do as other people do; it takes a great deal of trouble to be natural," said Amoret, giving a hasty and slightly penitential glance at Robert to see whether she was unintentionally criticising him, too; but reassuring herself by his generally familiar dress, though his waiscoat and necktie were hardly of the prevalent Bellwood order.

"That's so," said he; "but your really great reformer, your giant socialist, your true revolutionary leader, despises all fashions as mere cant."

"Of course he does," said Amoret. "Did you ever notice that a revolutionist is a man who can't control himself?"

"I'm a revolutionist, then, for the thought of coming back to Bellwood for a few days, while the carpenters were disporting themselves in the university building, popped into my head, and I couldn't control the impulse to do so, right away."

"I'm glad you did, for you can tell us rus-

tics about everything; we don't know whether Notre Dame has towers or a dome, or whether Milo was a sculptor or a town."

"Oh, never mind about Europe; I want to talk about Bellwood folks, and you, especially the latter," said Robert, noticing once more how pretty Amoret really was. "That was what brought me out of New York, and"—with an additional happy thought—"up this hill." He had never got over his boyish habit of believing his own improvisations. In fact, Amoret had not come to his mind for five years; but since, in those years, he had been artistically interested in the Ideal Vision, and here was an unquestionable incarnation of certain elements thereof, he was reasonably satisfied of the inherent truth of his supplementary remark: "I've never forgotten, you see, that there's only one Bellwood in the world, and only one you!" and he threw off his cap in graceful enthusiasm, and looked Amoret straight in the eye with the spontaneous honesty of youth.

"That's good," said Amoret, with real pleasure; "at least, half of it is. But all this does n't seem natural. We have n't quarrelled more than a quarter of our old stint;" and she bent and plucked a single daisy with a very long stem, the while a song-sparrow sang

like a canary-bird on a neighboring bush, and Rodney noticed the pretty springing of Amoret's wrist.

Most women, and more men, are homely; yet here on a summer hillside were a very presentable Apollo and Diana of Yankee birth, either of whom was sufficiently pleasant to the eye. Robert Rodney united negative and positive physical merits in an attractive way; he was neither heavy nor thin; not too tall or too short; and combined a pleasant roundness of outline with an activity and bright spontaneity of manner that seemed to make him a perennial boy, and certainly made him a universal favorite, save with the few who instinctively disliked him at the start for his buoyant conspicuousness. His hands and feet were smaller than one usually sees in a man of such physical strength; his rather large head was covered by a poetic mass of fine, sunny brown hair, which had been his distinction and his annoyance from boyhood; his skin was of delicate texture, but well browned by constant out-door exercise; his eyes, chameleon fashion, veered between green and gray; his teeth were perfect without being prominent; and sometimes his smile was the pleasantest thing one could ask to see. Too happy to be really selfish, he ac-

cepted good and bright things as his kin by right, and simply avoided, as far as he might, people and objects that seemed to him vulgar, or troublesome, or uninteresting. Some drops of Greek blood had evidently wandered through the veins of Saxon ancestors until they vitalized the pulse of this agreeable son of the north-temperate zone in the new world.

With fair artistic ability, and just money enough to get a decent art education at home and abroad, he had finally set up his easel in the American metropolis. By no means a genius, and clearly lacking both the tact of the schemer and the patience of the artist who works for long results, his quick eye and ready hand, and, most of all, his unfailing good luck, enabled him to avoid the weary days of waiting that confronted most beginners in the Twenty-third or West-tenth streets of his time. Like some of his latter-day successors in the Fifty-seventh street home of *impressions*, Rodney sometimes painted unintelligible landscapes in impossible yellow, or inscrutable damsels in washed-out green; but he was almost vexed with himself that, willy-nilly, he turned off so many swiftly painted story pictures, which the philistine public insisted on buying at

prices that gave him a very comfortable living. How could he help it? things *would* suggest themselves in Bleecker street and Washington square, up in Sleepy Hollow or down at Perth Amboy; and, after all, was it wicked to paint fruit-stands and baby-carts and old shoemakers? Let them keep out of the way, then; at least they were not so tiresome as Joan of Arc or Saint Mark's.

Certainly an artistic eye could have had no difficulty in finding a pleasing subject in Amoret. Rodney's not altogether vivid recollections of her, stimulated by the present agreeable apparition, reproduced a somewhat plain and silent little girl (save as she talked to herself in her lonely play), with serious eyes, a low forehead, brownish black hair, and scarcely any beauty, save her graceful and spontaneous little motions of hand or head or supple, small body. From that estate Bellwood had seen her grow into her present sweet girlhood, with its curious combination of childish simplicity and womanly self-reliance. Left largely to herself, with neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, she was a child of the soil, of whom God seemed to have dropped the personal responsibility, leaving her to grow as she would, for his own enjoyment and that of her small world, like a lily

in a mere. But her cares for her grandfather and the bookshop, and later, her modest money-making ventures of her own, had given her, with all her innocence, a sort of maturity that is never gained by some people who are always protected or always thrust aside. Bellwood, on the whole, hardly appreciated her or knew her, any more than it appreciated its sunsets, or mayflowers, or midnight stars; but now and then somebody said, "Amoret Wenton's getting to be quite a pretty girl;" and, at any rate, nobody disliked her.

Of all this Rodney was yet to learn in his homeward visit. Meanwhile, what did he see?

A girl of rather slight figure, and of an average height. Her little artistic heap of dark hair, almost black when not in the sunlight, covered her well-shaped head like a fairy's cap, and never seemed to need any attention, being neither smooth nor curly, parted nor put back, but only a bit of Amoret. The forehead was low, the eyebrows slightly arched, the eyes brown and rather far apart, the mouth small, like a solemn little rosebud of half-melancholy curl, the ear-tips just visible beneath the airy hair-shock at the side, the nose decidedly unimportant when measured by the rest of the face, and slightly "tip-tilted" at that. What right had such a dark

vision of a wood — thought Rodney, as he instinctively, professionally, and unsatisfactorily ran through the inventory just given — to a nose that a critic might call inharmonious? Just how to reconstruct it, in the painting already half planned, he did not see; and therefore he turned with more satisfaction to the pathetic little hands, the pretty arms, and the sweet symmetry of the sinuous body, at the same time felicitating himself, on general principles, that rosy plumpness in art was entirely out of fashion.

The little pause for happy thinking that often comes at the very beginning of a pleasant meeting was broken by Amoret, to whom Robert's apparition was merely one new agreeable in a bright afternoon. "Is n't Bellwood lovely!" she exclaimed with the enthusiasm of a native who really revelled in its granite hillsides and shady ways, and yet knew that sometimes it needed an affectionate defence against heedless visitors, who declared its houses ugly, its streets ragged, its door-yards unkempt, and its people unresponsive.

"It's God's smile to-day," said Rodney, truthfully enough. He had been wandering through the old familiar town with mixed impressions of pleasure and disappointment; one looks at his birthplace, after years of

absence, as a soul looks at its dead body. Reaching the village by the midnight train, it had pleased his fancy to walk through the slumbering region for an hour or two, touching the trees behind which he had many a time played tag; looking at the plain old sleep-stilled houses, whose every chimney he knew so well; and finally, walking round his birthhome and viewing it from every point, like an undisturbed nocturnal burglar of memories. He could hardly believe how cramped that native house really was, as far as its immediate surroundings were concerned; but it had been big enough for all his boyish dreams, now well toward fulfillment. "Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood;" all seemed his, and yet not his; the realest things in the world, and yet the phantasm of a dream. The bright stars glittered through the tops of the sturdy horse-chestnut he had set out as a boy, when its sticky top-bud was not so high as his own head; the windows of the house looked like soulless eyes; while up on the stable still stood the flagpole he had put there at the imminent risk of his neck; he remembered that he split the bottom of the staff with a big nail that had nevertheless held the wood in place for all these years. No little home-made flag flew

there now, — and when Rodney went belatedly to bed, his sunny mind was as near the mood of pathos as it ever came.

Next morning most of those he saw on the streets did not remember him, nor he them; and on the whole the greetings of some few old acquaintances bored him; school playmates had become commonplace, old folks remained tiresome, and the inquiries he had to answer were clumsy or irrelevant. As for asking questions himself, he did not care to, — save to find out that the present occupant of his old home was a new doctor, named Ercott, or some such thing; and it was in self-defence that he had climbed the hill this afternoon. “How much more attractive the world would be if you did n’t have to meet people!” thought this promising and successful painter of old women knitting on the doorstep, and sweet little girls with handfuls of forget-me-nots, and good old gnarly country deacons standing to pray in Wednesday evening meeting. Why, even his canvas illustrating the Kitten and the Falling Leaves had led a careful critic to say that here was “a young American painter who is, above all things, a lover and sharer of all that is wholesome in the world of simple humanity and heartfelt happiness; and who promises, what

with his sympathetic insight and his enthusiastic brush, to become no mean chronicler of the folk-life of his time."

But never mind his midnight or starlight musings, or his morning disenchantments; here, at any rate, was Amoret. Amoret — what a pretty name! How came it to reappear for this wildwood creature? thought Rodney. Did it just happen, or had her mother read about that "goodly mayd . . . the which was all in lilly white arayd;" Rodney was surprised to find some such quotation floating in his own mind.

If there was one thing in the world really disliked by this painter of commonplace affection and homely characteristics, it was the ordinary; if he reverenced anything save himself and whatever made him æsthetically comfortable, it was the peculiar. That Amoret was a novelty he was satisfied in view of all his sage sight-seeings in a wider world; and a new sensation flashed upon him, though he did not care to take the trouble to define it. As far as Amoret's own feelings went, this was a day when analysis of existence seemed really despicable. So, when Robert said that Bellwood was God's smile, her June joy was full; not for many a day had two words fitted so well into her heart's mood; and when their

eyes met, there was nothing but spontaneous happiness in their world.

“Now tell me all about yourself,” said Robert, with the affableness of former childish familiarity, and with an interest whose present genuineness was unquestionable; the last ten minutes had certainly made their mark upon an externally impressionable mind.

“Oh! I’d rather hear about you,” said Amoret simply; “I have lived here in Bellwood all my life, and my little doings are not worth talking about.”

“But some people make their own world,” replied Rodney, and checked himself before saying more, as there came to his mind a quick apprehension that subtle and indirect compliment would affect the beautiful girl before him, but that mere flattery would be worse than useless.

“One has to, here,” said she, “else we would n’t have a very great world. I’ve helped grandfather in his shop, and I’ve taught music up and down this valley; and once I made a long visit to a dear old second cousin, who spends her summers on the sea-side rocks.”

“Yes,” said Rodney, with something like a woman’s intuition of the heart of the mat-

ter; "but what do you really care for, what is the thing that makes life worth most when you've shut out everybody but yourself? It seems to me that we only half live, the greater part of the time, and that it's useless to ask what we've *done*; what we've *been* is the real thing." And Amoret thought that she had not heard in five years from anybody, save her grandfather, a remark so well worth making.

"Well," said she, "it's good to work, it's better to help, and it's best to grow, I suppose;" and she thought of the few and poor little poems in her old desk at home, in which she had tried to put some of her thoughts, and which, aside from her grandfather and half a dozen pet books, were the only things in the world she would hate to leave if she were to die. And she amused herself by a little inward giggle at the absurdity of the remark, were she to make it in reply to Robert: "Poetry makes life worth living; that is, my poetry first and other folks' afterward." Instead she said: "Oh, it's enough to exist, and to let Beethoven and Wagner sing your creed for you."

"Beethoven was a pantheist," said Rodney; "and that's what such a day as this makes of us all; one thing is as beautiful and as good and as important as another."

“Do you really think he was a pantheist?” said Amoret, to whom the old theological nomenclature of New England still had some objurgatory power, though she was liberal enough in her own thoughts. “I think he tried to say in that movement in the Ninth Symphony—don’t you remember? the *adagio* that is such an illustration of the pathos of the major key, where it begins so softly with the funny little eighth note off the beat—just what the apostle said in his ‘God is love.’”

“That’s what I mean,” said he; “mix together the sunshine, and the bees, and the flowers, and the birds, and the butterflies, and the west wind, and this pine smell, and these old granite rocks, and yesterday, and to-morrow, and you, and me, and I should think the maker of the universe would feel very well satisfied with things.”

Amoret laughed in spite of herself, in the very gayety of contradiction, and added: “But I suppose we are in duty bound to think of all the poor sufferers in the world, and the wicked yesterdays and the dreary to-morrows; besides, how do you know that the Over-Soul is as well satisfied with you as you are yourself?”

“I said you *and* me,” said Rodney; “so the average of the two would be very high.”

“Worse yet,” exclaimed Amoret, as she

clapped her hands and rose from her seat.
“But I must go.”

“May I go too?” said he; “you know that used to be one of our most frequent beggings when we were children.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Amoret; “if you can go where I am going, — down to grandfather’s to get ready for giving a music-lesson. The more we are together to-day the better I like it,” said she, simply.

“What nonsense it is,” said Rodney, “to call childhood days the happiest; I never was half so happy as I am now.”

“Nor half so good company,” thought Amoret; and the thought slipped to her lips before she knew it.

“Thank you,” said he, sincerely; “I used to be a hateful little prig.”

“Oh, no, said Amoret; “I was the prig and you were — let me see, you were —”

“The blunderbuss of the juvenile tragedy,” laughed Rodney; and Amoret did not deny it in her pretty smile, adding, “Never mind the past, the present is enough for me; don’t you remember

“‘ What thy life last put heart and soul into,
There shall I taste thy product.’ ”

“Don’t I remember — though I don’t recall your quotation for the very good reason that

I never heard it — when first that idea popped into *my* head! I had climbed up into the old steeple, above the clock and beside the big bell, and I was looking down on the little folks on the street, and did n't dare lean very far over the rail. It was then that I thought: 'It's *now*, now, all the while, for them and for me, and it's always now for God up in the clouds and for us crawling around on the earth. And this instant is the sum and show of all one has ever been.' "

Rodney had not read many books, but he had often enjoyed the benefit of his own ideas, such as they were; and although his swift notions were as a rule neither influential nor consistently progressive, they sounded well enough when spoken by his red lips and happy voice. Amoret, at least, who knew half her own bookshelf by heart, thought his extempORIZINGS better than her quotations, not realizing how little she herself was limited to other people for her thoughts.

And so they walked down to the bookstore in the radiant Now.

IV.

HERE AND THERE.

M R. WELBY was standing in his door as Amoret and Robert walked down the hill to his corner, his thin figure clad in its usual rusty coat, and surmounted by the inevitable straw hat. A little girl had just bought an arithmetic and a slate, and had been turning with envious fingers the leaves of a podgy little copy of "Evenings at Home," staring at the venerable woodcuts of the young mouse, the thieving kite in his swoop upon the chicken-yard, and the ancient man who sat upon a rock as the pictorial introduction to "The Transmigrations of Indur." The good old bibliopole, pleased that in these degenerate days a child should care to look at one of the wholesome juveniles of a bygone generation, had told her he would give her the book if she would tell him what "transmigrations" meant, and would promise to read the story of "Eyes and No Eyes." The promise came bashfully, but quickly; the definition — was not the little lass a New Englander? —

was given in some rough but decently adequate fashion; and the book was duly transferred, done up in a brown-paper parcel tied with a red string, as though it had been a real purchase. Thereby Mr. Welby gave away the profits got by the sale of the arithmetic and the slate, but he gained the sense of satisfaction which approves the true-minded book-vendor as a local missionary of wisdom.

Turning to the door of the shop, after this little transaction in didactics, he was enjoying the cool breeze just beginning to blow from the west, and was half-fashioning in his mind some phrase for his book, on the evanescence of the permanent and the perpetuity of the transient. *Once*—the might of a single look! —what more fleeting than ancient civilizations and marble monuments? what more enduring than the little breath of the breeze that has fainted or flickered for a million years? And what is an idea but an inspiration; what an inspiration but a breath? The wind, the spirit, the soul, the ghost: that it is which we brought with us and shall carry with us. So when his next jotting was written in the slowly growing volume in the desk it took this form:

The saddest thing about death, next to leaving a friend or two, is parting with one's books; but we can take with us the souls of both.

Then it was that Amoret and Robert, with quick step and laughing faces, came in sight. They were so happy in themselves, and Mr. Welby was so lonely, that the old man's eyes discerned the two before they saw him at all. And in that discernment came a flash to the brain, whose workings seemed all the quicker for advancing years, the inevitable duality behind so much of our philosophy: *he* and *she*. The ancient parallelism reverberated in his mind:—

“There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
Yea, four which I know not:
The way of an eagle in the air;
The way of a serpent upon a rock;
The way of a ship in the midst of a sea,
And the way of a man with a maid.”

By this time Amoret and Robert were half-way across the street, so the thinker was obliged to postpone a supplementary reflection which finally appeared in his manuscript volume as follows—

The good old times forsooth! Who knows but we are now living in crude and crass antiquity? Certainly the nineteenth is the first comparatively decent century the world has ever known.

The philosopher was, in fact, unphilosophically annoyed at the radiant appearance and

happy association of the two who now came up to him like a dual incarnation of young summer. It was not that crabbed age and youth could not live together, for his mind was far younger and less jaded than Robert's; he could have spent a whole afternoon in equal companionship with the little girl of "Evenings at Home;" and surely Amoret was good company the whole year round. Nor did he suspect or distrust Amoret in any way; she was in some things his elder and his teacher, for she really had more of the only ancient thing in the world — wisdom — and he knew it. If Eros can still befool Psyche in these days, so be it; Psyche ought to know better in equal opportunity. But, in the first place, Robert had interrupted a thought, yes, two thoughts, for the great work; a circumstance to upset anybody. Then again, the childly heart of the author of "The Philosophy of Life" had always mistrusted Robert as not being a true boy, but a masquerading metempsychosis. Last and chiefest was the everlasting intrusiveness of sex.

"Ah! how do you do, sir," said the old gentleman, with punctilious kindness, in reply to Robert's rather eager and would-be flattering greeting; yet what his mind was saying to itself was this: "May the good

Lord keep my little girl; but I do wish she might have been born a thousand years hence, when love will be nothing but friendship, yet keeping its own pretty name."

Afterward they went in for a little, and while Amoret prepared for her music-lesson, the young man and the old one sat in the cool back room behind the bookshelves and counters, overlooking the self-centred river in which, forty years apart, both of them used to row, and fish, and swim. Rodney, being obliged to his senior for not pestering him with misfitting inquiries, talked volubly of his own works and ways at home and abroad, skipping from Bellwood to Washington square, and from the Pinakothek to the dandelions on the disused wharf, with an agility that even Mr. Welby had to admit was about as graceful and self-sacrificing as that of a kitten at play. The two were so unlike in all their tastes and mentalities that at least some brief conversation between them was easy; we talk most readily, in the off-hand meetings of life, with those who are like us, or with our utter opposites. Few indeed were the people who were not put at ease by Mr. Welby's manner of gentle superiority and self-respecting deference, — superiority, for his was the aristocracy of the man of thought; deference,

for he knew he was a public servant behind his counter. As for Rodney, he was never ill at ease save when he suspected that people disliked or distrusted him; and nothing in Mr. Welby's manner troubled him at this time.

Indeed, when there happened to come to Rodney's mind the not disagreeable thought that he was now getting for a couple of easily made paintings more than the patient book-vendor and his rediscovered granddaughter could make in their most economical and painstaking year, his self-esteem grew pleasantly warm, and he ventured to put on a little of that purring and patronizing manner which "successful" people like to carry back to their native heath. On the whole, however, the clear-cut old face opposite him displayed no signs of being overawed by inquiries concerning the book business, literature, or Amoret's education. With scrupulous loyalty to his love for the girl, however, her grandfather told his eager young listener some little part of her faithful helpfulness in making the old shop more attractive; in getting pretty and modern wall-papers, and lamp-shades, and stationery, and pocket-books, and periodicals to add to the somewhat venerable stock in trade; and in deftly selling the same. Even

Mr. Welby, however, did not know how Amoret detested the knickknackery of the so-called modern bookstore,—how she hated to part with the best-loved of the old volumes, or how hard it was for her to be polite to brainless or overbearing customers whose money she knew was much needed in the old wooden till, so scantily sprinkled with coin.

On the more important subject of the development of Amoret's personality Robert got no more information than that her sole teachers had been (aside from the village schools) her grandfather, his books, Nature, and herself, in that order of ascending importance.

When Amoret came downstairs, the happy look still irradiating her whole face, Rodney was gazing through the window at the little square patch of tide-water where the river rose and fell on the slope between two old wharves. Boyish memories rose to haunt every spot in Bellwood, and half of them suggested pictures. Here he had once seen an open-air baptism, and had wondered whether the tall and half-submerged minister, in his anxiety to keep down the floating skirts of the "candidate," would unwittingly disappear in the sudden hole off Pinkington's wharf, of the location of which the town boys

had superior knowledge. Here, too, he had once seen a boatman towing to shore a drowned maniac from the hospital up the river, the tow-rope tied to the rigid arm that the swollen but half-sunk corpse upstretched above the hot summer wave. What a good subject for a canvas! but very likely it would not sell; certainly not to the provincial plutocrats who bought his village-blacksmiths and children-in-apple-trees to hang in their dining-rooms. Something really ought to be done, however, with that ghastly clutch of the dead fingers, holding, as it were, their own painter—and as the wretched little pun came into his head there was a good honest step behind him, and he turned to see Amoret again, — Amoret in a nondescript brown of some fashion that neither he nor she could assign to type or period, but that seemed right in the eyes of the artist and of the wearer alike. Her clothes appeared to do nothing but drape the person they covered, which, perhaps, is one of the functions of clothes.

“Well, Robert,” said she, “are you going with me to the south end? When are you going home?” she added, abruptly. The question would not have annoyed Mr. Welby if he had not detected in it some suspicion of desire that the date be not immediate.

"Oh, I don't know," laughed he; "that's just what you used to ask when I'd clumsily spoiled your play-tea, and lost one of your doll's gloves, and torn the frontispiece of your pet picture-book."

"Yes," said Amoret; "you used to stand for change, and I for conservatism. What would the world be without either?"

"It would be perfect with the two together," flashed Rodney's reply, which struck him as being so pat that he would risk it even in Mr. Welby's presence. He seldom made any remarks without some reference to himself, or the likes and dislikes that formed the sum total of his personality; and he was never so self-conscious as in his swiftest improvisations. But Amoret interested him, and he could see plainly enough that he interested her, at least for the present. Just what it all meant he would perhaps think out sometime, should it seem worth while.

"Good-bye, grandpa," said Amoret, with a sidewise glance and a little pat on his coat-sleeve. "Good-bye for now," added Rodney, who was never formal save when compelled; and Mr. Welby gave them a minor benediction in the suggestion that they would better not talk simultaneously all the time, as on the whole a dialogue suited conversational speech better than did a chorus.

As they started to walk down the river street, Rodney could hardly avoid a swift reflection on the narrow circumstances of Amoret and her grandfather, indeed, of Bellwood in its entirety. On the whole, all of them seemed to lack the glitter of prosperity on the one hand — pleasure-accepting Rodney loved Paris and felt no discontent with New York — and the romance of actual dilapidation and antiquity on the other. But he was too much of an epicurean to concern himself about money or the lack of it, and his thought only consolidated itself in the non-committal remark: "Do you ever get tired of Bellwood?"

"Only once in a while, when for a little minute I tire of everything; but I guess Paradise is as near here as anywhere."

"Nearer, nowadays," soliloquized the artist in a half-tone; and Amoret replied: "What a good-natured couple of friends we seem to be to-day! We ought to arrange an antiphonal service, you to say 'I am happy,' and I to reply, 'I am, too.'"

"Yes," said he; "then there could be a chorus to the duologue: 'Happy are we both of us, the livelong day.'"

"I think there is too much grumbling in the world, too much endurance, and too little

joy," said Amoret. "I know what work is; and sometimes the little devil of Worry comes prowling round my door; but for all that I'm happy and grateful, most of the time."

"Gratitude, too," added Rodney, "need not always be outspoken; how grateful that warm cat on the doorstep looks, just now. Sometimes I think I'd like to be metamorphosed into a feline."

"Wild or domestic?" queried Amoret. "But I am not sure that a perennial flower would not be better; every luxury of light and shade, and rain and frost, and cool hibernation in turn, and then gentle death on a soft grave."

"You wouldn't be you unless you were talking about graves."

"But not about worms or sheeted goblins. Death is nothing to me but contrast, — black against white, for the white to show more brightly. You're an artist, and so you know all about complements and values; it's just so with joy and sorrow; I honestly would prefer achieved virtue with sin plain in sight, to negative innocence;" and the girl looked far away down to the turn of the river. Robert, for his part, fully appreciated the remark, but felt, for once in his life, a certain sense of shame at the unlikelihood that he

would ever prove its truth. So he quickly turned the subject, in his favorite way, by exclaiming repetitiously, "Oh, did I ever have so bright an afternoon in all my life!"

"I hope you have had better ones, and will have many more," said Amoret; "but it *is* pleasant for wayfarers on life's pretty pathways to meet and just resume the dropped threads. That's what friendship ought to be; twenty years afterwards, in Timbuctoo, we should start where we left off, as though nothing had happened. So good-bye until next time," said she, with a quick little laugh, as she ran up the steps of Squire Bennett's bare white house, where she was to give her music-lesson, and left Robert standing in surprise on the sidewalk.

Things were always so pleasant for him that he had fallen into the habit of thinking that he, as a matter of course, must be the one to decide when to say "enough;" so he was a little jarred by this abrupt termination of a mildly titillating experience. Amoret was as innocent of coquetry as a marble Diana, or a puppy that assumes the prompt friendship of the whole world; but had she planned it, she could hardly have left on the painter's mind a quicker zest for further companionship than she caused by her flight up the steps.

It was as though a humming-bird had suddenly swept into the illimitable; but Rodney preferred to play that part himself.

The artist's stay in Bellwood was prolonged by daily indecision until a fortnight had passed. He accepted, without visible reluctance, a few invitations to simple suppers, here and there, and pleasantly ate, at those repasts served according to the local fashion, his modicum of flaky raised biscuits, "sauce," and two or three kinds of cake. The dining-rooms and shady parlors seemed, to his artistic eye, quite to miss duly proportioned effects; the old silver candlesticks on the mantels were unused, the delicate gilt-rimmed china was flanked by plated silverware of Philistine patterns, and solid mahogany chairs stood too near veneered centre-tables and pyramidal "what-nots." The noteworthy festivities, however, were a symmetrical and anciently aristocratic tea at Squire Bennett's, and a delightful semi-Bohemian noonday lunch in Mr. Welby's upstairs dining-room above the wharf. Amoret's intuitive taste minimized the vulgarities of eating and at the same time raised appetite to the level of a legitimate pleasure.

In fact, for him, everything in the fortnight seemed to centre around that meditative and

musical up-country maiden. The other young girls of the town were, in his frankly sybaritic analysis, somewhat too rural; while a few, possessing unquestionable intellect and possible taste, were not sufficiently conspicuous as regards youth, good looks, or pretty gowns. Among the men, Rodney's chief associates were Mr. Welby himself — whom he perforce respected and slightly feared, for his undoubted mental strength and his silently invincible guardianship of Amoret — and the youngish, book-loving doctor who lived in Rodney's birthplace. This Doctor Urquhart — for that was the way he spelled his name, Rodney discovered — seemed to know the contents of the neighboring village library, and some things besides; perhaps it was because he was not of New England birth, but had strayed into the Bellwood enclosure from some other bailiwick. At any rate, he was not provincial; Rodney, since his Parisian studies, had some expansive ideas on the subject of one's natal environment, and was glad to find that not all Bellwood people were alike.

As far as Amoret was concerned, walks and talks and a picnic at Runaway Pond and a row on the river had followed with American freedom, but somehow he felt that he had

made no progress. Progress? toward what? Was he in love? Distinctly not, in his own opinion. Was she? If so her tact was consummate. Rodney had adequate knowledge of the chess of flirtation, whatever the astuteness or the simplicity of his opponent; but Amoret's happy and unmonotonous friendliness puzzled him. For himself, drifting was good enough fun. But his pleasure in Amoret's ready promise to exchange an occasional letter was mitigated by a clear conviction that his good-bye call was a failure. A man never feels less satisfied with himself than when he knows that he is worse than wasting the few minutes left him in the presence of a woman he admires. The experience is dust at the time and ashes afterward. One misty remark of Amoret's bothered him all the way back to New York; it rose between him and the sun as he looked out of the window on the day-train, and it overcast the moon as he stood on the deck of the Sound steam-boat. "I never could care for anyone," said she, "a single minute after I found him disloyal to the ideal of his best moods; for then I should know that my supposed friend had never really lived."

"Must a man always be perfect?" Rodney had replied, with a little irritation, which

was not wholly concealed in his codicil remark: "You are too good for this world; I don't know where you can find fit companions this side of Paradise."

"I mean," said Amoret, slowly, and she clasped her hands around her knees and looked at the moon, "that if I ever loved anybody, woman or man, who proved to be different from what I thought, my love would have been given to a creature that never existed, and so would come back to me as though it had not been."

"But there is a love," said Rodney, "that follows into the gutter and the depths of the sea," and he felt that he had the better of the argument. "It may be a regret, but it's also a hope."

"One pities a suicide," said Amoret, simply, and she seemed to Rodney to be as far away from him as a star.

"Aren't you just a little bit more inexorable than God?" retorted Rodney; and spent the next thirty minutes in more or less floundering efforts to restore things to the condition in which they stood before this little conversation anent the verities of the eternities.

For there seemed something actually grotesque in such a turn to the talk just then. Amoret, as the moon was softly rising across

the still river, had been playing the allegretto from Chopin's opus 59; and Rodney's half-indulged suspicion that she had been talking to him through the keys was strengthened when she rose with a little sigh of weary tenderness (so he supposed), and asked whether he would n't like to go out on the old wharf and see the moon rise. There was a great dry mossy log, a relic of the days of Bellwood's commercial dreams, on which Amoret liked to sit summer evenings; and thither they went. As luck would have it, Mr. Welby had delightedly gone up to his desk to wrestle with the proper wording of a new thought which seemed to him the best that had occurred to him for some time, as far as the real inner idea of the Book was concerned:

To live the right life is to do nothing and everything.

Rodney's handsome self was artistically and attractively enveloped in summer habiliments that gave the best effect to the hatless hair, the impulsive eyes, and the radiant young face, made more attractive by a visible mood of anticipatory memory of so delightful-some a time. The summer day had been hot; every movement of Amoret's round neck and half-visible shoulders was closely followed by

delicate clinging lace; her bare arms had never a faulty line, and the little bulge of the wrist was really vexatiously pretty; one foot rested on the other, while above her low shoes Rodney noted a pair of clocked silk stockings her mother used to wear at the dances of a generation ago. A faint odor of violets exhaled from a bunch of the flowers carelessly tucked into the top of her high belt.

It seemed to Rodney that there were but two things in the world, — Amoret and he; or, more properly, only one thing, — his as yet unknown feeling towards this lovely girl. They talked a little of the moonrise over the eastern hill; of the ripple of the river; of the distant light reflected in Braham's Cove, down below; of the clearness of the nine-o'clock bell coming down from the city two miles north; of the old days and the new; of art and beauty; and, before they knew it, of the might-have-been and the may-be, the mystery of life. Then they looked up to the zenith, with its sparse stars in the bright moonlight, and spoke of space and time. Amoret's thoughts were always readily turned in a kind of far-eyed abstraction to the depths of the oceans of the ultimate skies; and now, with soul bent by their poetic talk to the illimitables of the astronomy of the unseen, she knew

and yet did not know when Rodney picked a few of the longer-stemmed flowers from her waist and twined them in and out of her hair. It was to her as though her grandfather were smoothing her forehead when some problem perplexed the little girl's head; but to Rodney it seemed that the time had well-nigh come to catch that white loveliness in eager arms and give their first red kiss to the rose-bud lips with the melancholy little curl. He heard his heart beat the quicker as a little wind from the north blew just one hair from Amoret's pretty head across his cheek, which tingled and then grew cold.

But Amoret sprang up with the suddenness of one in a dream, her soul open only to the ideas just broached anew, and exclaimed: "Oh, things *must* sooner or later be right in this wonderful world, with a million more wonderful all around its poor little self."

Rodney's first impulse was to grasp her hand, but on second thought he sat in silent mood and watched her as she tossed a pebble toward a bit of wood floating down the moonlit stream, noting, to his surprise, that she hit it.

"We are all parts of some great possibility," said he, as though he had followed her line of meditation all along. "You and I, you

and I; what if we had lived a thousand years ago or a thousand years hence? Did you ever hear an old song called, 'A Conjecture,' or something like that?"

"No," said she; "what is it?"

"Three little stanzas I found in an old song-book, with the queerest copperplate pictures, in your grandfather's shop the other day; they partly stuck in my memory, and ran about like this:—

"‘I wonder, dear, if you had been
The maiden queen’s pet maid of honor,
A flower of that fair time wherein
A court of roses smiled upon her,

"‘And I, erewhile, by Trojan wall
Had fiercely fought for Grecian glory,
Beheld the pride of Priam fall,
And home in Athens told the story.

"‘Whether we, wandering in the glow
Of the Hereafter’s radiant spaces,
Would there have mutely met, and so
Seen love make bright our yearning faces.’"

"That's my idea of love," said he; "it's above space, or time, or law"—and the last word of the three was just one too many, for Amoret noted it first of all, wondered what it meant, and asked him.

"‘There is no sin to hearts that love,’" said

he, in continued ill-fortune. Then it was that Amoret sat down again, but it chanced to be on the farther end of the log; the violets had fallen from the ebon flame of her hair when she tossed the stone; her face was grave; and she picked up and threw over her shoulders, with a tiny shiver, the little shawl that seemed so superfluous ten minutes before.

“Oh,” said she in a low voice, “that all, all depends on what one means by love.” And then she explained it in the phrase that annoyed Rodney on his homeward journey, and with diminishing frequency for the rest of his life.

Rodney reached New York in no very amiable humor. Amoret had at first quickened and irradiated his not very enthusiastic memories of Bellwood; but the drab-colored events of night-before-last had dispelled the glow and left things rather worse than before. His pride had been touched; when a winsome egotist has but half made up his mind to follow a certain line of irresponsible action, he does not enjoy having a contrary decision thrust before him by somebody else. To go on and make Amoret something more than a summer fancy would take time and trouble, and involve a pretended or actual reconstruc-

tion of his own personality, which had always satisfied him sufficiently well; but to banish her from his mind was for some reason not easy. Indeed, for the first time within his memory, it seemed as though fate was interfering with freedom, and the effect of the interference was to vulgarize the actual because of the loss of the ideal — even the old ideal of undisturbed epicureanism.

Sending his luggage to his rooms by express, Rodney was minded to walk to his Washington square quarters, and to take breakfast on the way. The cool warehouses on Warren street, with their smell of groceries and vegetables and crockery crates, and the rumble of drays on West Broadway, affected his mind with a certain sense of friendly consolation; the world went on, anyway, if girls did act unexpectedly. He wondered whether that stooping and business-like rag-picker, with the bulgy bag on his back, ever had a love affair; and with his usual quick eye for effects, he made up his mind to paint sometime a dual picture, — the love-letter in two stages of its career; *Alpha and Omega* would be a good title for it. Then his eye caught old Johnstine, the wholesale grocer, just entering his nine-story "establishment;" he knew Johnstine by sight, but Johnstine

knew not him. Did the plutocrat ever think of his boyhood in Ulster county, or the brook behind the hill? Probably not, though Rodney had once sold him, through a middle-man, a picture of a lot of cows by a log trough near the bars; eight hundred dollars for a week's work; pretty good pay, chuckled the simple-minded artist, as he gave a glance at the man of money, and of flour barrels. Crossing Canal street, he noticed the spitz dog, dyed red, blue, and yellow, as an advertisement of his owner's trade; and he laughed to himself at the thought of the way in which a few tints catch the public eye. After all, the dyer and he were in the same business.

As he followed his leisurely path through the broad shabbiness of South Fifth avenue, he happened to think how many high-up windows were adorned with forlorn geraniums or nondescript dusty greennesses in tomato-cans and soap-boxes: another subject for a sentimental picture. Really, he must set up a painting establishment and hire apprentices, if this sort of artistic fertility were to continue. "Beneficial results of vacation travel in quickening the mind," he laughed to himself, as with slightly restored self-satisfaction he turned into Bleecker street for a

leisurely breakfast in a Gallic basement restaurant affected by men of his set. And just around the corner he met the magnificent Nancy so abruptly that he almost ran into her. "Oh," said she, "beg pardon," said he; and then the two acquaintances indicated orally a simultaneous desire to ascertain the cause of so early an appearance on the street.

Nancy Cibber was the daughter of a London cabman, whose long-suffering horse had kicked him to death, in a spasm of that revenge which is a kind of wild justice, when the child was six years old. A jaded widow — who belonged to the class of beings that always have something happening to them — and five children were left to make their way in the world; and Nancy's juvenile career had irregularly proceeded until she rose, at fifteen, to be a barmaid. Her amiability and her prettiness made her a favorite, and her easy coolness saved her from downright sin, though she had peccadilloes by the score. She was above vice and below respectability. If more brilliant or more vicious, she would have been dangerous; but as her desires were satisfied with a particularly good dinner o' Sundays, a neat dress, and a few shillings saved at the end of the month, she led with reasonable blamelessness a life that would

have been impossible in Paris and incredible in Boston. As for Man, she had come to regard him chiefly as a bibulous animal, with a few cheap jokes.

But fortune soon advanced her to a plane at once more conspicuous and more remunerative. Burlesque was the vogue at the time, in half the London theatres; and while some humble intellectual, histrionic, or vocal powers were needed in its producers, vigorous and striking physical personalities were yet more necessary. One day a theatrical manager stepped into the Golden Bell for a glass of Burton, and was duly served by the stately and affable Nancy, who caught his professional eye at once, what with her Junonian shoulders, her yellow hair, her blue eyes, and her black dress and white collar. Why not introduce her as a Venus, or spirit of the wood, or goddess of the weird, or something of the sort, in his forthcoming extravaganza to be called the Procession of Life? Two or three interviews proved that Nancy had an audible voice, an easy carriage, and a teachable disposition; and though her powers of reading and speaking were limited, and of vocalization apparently non-existent, he had never seen a flesh-and-blood statue of greater possibilities of professional utilization. Her

name, he found, was Nancy Crackenby; the first title was good enough, for old-fashioned christenings were coming into theatrical vogue; while the surname was readily changed to a well-known dissyllable that looked well on the bills.

Nancy was five feet nine inches tall, weighed a hundred and sixty-five pounds, had round, soft hands of considerable size, a figure fit to translate into perennial marble, and a good walk; what else was needed in a stage procession? Let the homelier women do the singing and talking and gesticulating. When the play was brought out she instantly charmed the public. One of the young university graduates who wrote dramatic criticisms for a leading daily said of her: *incessu patuit dea*; and the phrase, with due care for accuracy, letter by letter, was transferred to the bill-boards next day. Her weekly wage was four pounds, — plenty for a roast beef dinner every day, for good clothes on the street, for an occasional barber's dressing of her huge mass of tawny hair, and, best of all, for a high-priced canary bird she had coveted for six months. A fortnight's savings bought the bird, the third week supplied a pretty cage, and the noodles' bouquets that now came to her by wholesale were more than

sufficient to surround the golden-throated singer with bowers fit for his most rapturous dreams. As for the notes attached to the flowers, Nancy could not read, without more trouble than she was willing to take; and her tired-faced mother, whom she now transferred to her own modest quarters, was perfection in the duties of virago-guardian against persecutions on the part of admirers inclined to press their claims in person. Mrs. Crackenby had not fought the battle of life, and her late husband, for twenty years in vain. "They're all alike," was the comprehensive motto of this follower of Schopenhauer; "good clo's can't fool me."

At length, after a long London run, the Procession of Life made its westward way across the Atlantic, and marched nightly over the boards of a down-town theatre. The Crakenbys took up their quarters in the top story of a house in a once fashionable row on the south side of Bleecker Street; the radiant canary was duly enshrined in his new sky-temple; bouquets and notes reappeared; the four pounds had become thirty dollars; and remittances began to be sent to the younger children in London. New York was charmed with the source of this modest prosperity, and though Nancy's little part in the play

elicited no Latin quotations, one poetic rhetorician expressed his appreciation of her "magnificence of muliebility."

When Rodney met Nancy that morning, around the Bleecker street corner, it was as though he had encountered an opposing fate, most welcome because most dreaded. It might as well come now as any time. She was the incarnation, in her superb body — with its never half-an-inch too much or too little, and its curves and lines and tints that even a painter need not wish to revise, — of all that Amoret was not. Amoret was beautiful, to be sure, but hers was the beauty of a star-child, a creature of a universal rather than a particular sphere, in which sunlight and song weighed as much as bone and blood. Nancy was a daughter of the world, a late progeny of tempted and tempting Eve, a sort of consummation of the physical element alone. Amoret was the soul and mind of New England, yet somehow strangely unprovincial; but London Nancy? had she a soul and mind at all? A kind of pleasant feline intelligence seemed to take the place of both. Yet Rodney had always liked her, ever since they first met in the little fruit-shop, where he was buying grapes and she bananas. Her large and languorous beauty

was so obvious that it charmed him, by the law of opposites, into a sort of indifference to it; she was like a partially animated picture, right pleasant to see; only he made up his mind that if any man-about-town insulted her, he would himself exercise his undeniable powers of fist, pistol, or poniard, at the risk of a newspaper sensation and a smirched name.

Nancy, for her part, was love-free, but on the whole she had never met anybody she better liked among the thousands of men who had stared at her. Meanwhile Mrs. Crackenby, with the shrewdness of a thick mind bent on a single object, saw that Rodney's inner indifference to Nancy made him a superficially valuable friend and protector, for the time being; and so the three had met with tolerable frequency, and Rodney had been a welcome caller at their humble rooms, on which occasion the canary, who for the best of reasons despised and distrusted men, relapsed into marked and unbroken silence.

"When are you going to take mamma and me to Long Branch," said Nancy with pertinent promptness. "And where have you been these three weeks to forget us entirely? Off in the country, I suppose, flirting on the inn-lawns, and us poor girls sweating away every night on that hot stage."

Rodney was a little disgusted, slightly penitential, and half glad to be once more in the society of a conspicuous inferior. Under the influence of the last named mood he cheerily said, "Next Sunday, Nan, we'll go down to the Branch and have no end of a jolly time," language which gave to the east London lass a high satisfaction with the linguistic attainments of some Americans, and brought into her mind a series of attractive pictures, — a steamboat ride, quail on toast, asparagus, a glass of champagne, and a half-hour in a new bathing-dress of gorgeous stripes of yellow and black.

For the trio, rarely reinforced by any fourth or fifth, had not been unfamiliar in the Park, at the *table d'hôte* of the Bohemia restaurant, or even at Coney Island. Rodney's artistic independence fortified him against the possibility of disagreeable criticism from his rather numerous friends of both sexes, in the fashionable district up-town. He despised the conventional; Nancy, from ample experience, hated the ways of poverty; and Mrs. Crackenby disliked nearly everybody and everything. Here was a ready bond of union equally unintelligible to the just and the unjust, and chiefly to suspicion of whatsoever social grade. In fact, Rodney

himself never felt that he could make, were he required, any widely acceptable justification of the lone but delectable kiss he once gave the lovely Nancy at the very instant when both were suddenly submerged by a mighty wave off the West End Pavilion. It was just before he went to Bellwood; Nancy, doubtless, had forgotten it already; but Rodney remembered it when the large lips, once wet with the sparkling brine of life, had lain for a decade six feet beneath the dry earth of Woodlawn. And in those later years — a middle-aged man, over his pipe and beer — he wondered whether there would ever be some far-off land, some distant day of the soul, when all joy would be one and interchangeable; when a memory would be as good as a fact, and some single youthful aspiration fully excuse the stolid degeneration of age.

They went to Long Branch. Rodney was envied by half the men on the boat, and poor Nancy denounced by half the women; while both, when they got home and resumed their business of giving the public the pictures it paid for — she behind the footlights and he behind the great gilt frame — saw the late summer melt into hot autumn, and autumn freeze into winter. Nancy went "on the road" with her troupe, and displayed herself

to this or that provincial city; Rodney dreamed and painted as of yore, and, for rumors anent Nancy, fell into disfavor in a certain courtly house on Forty-seventh street, where paternal respectability, maternal kindness, and two pleasant daughters had formerly welcomed him. Frigidity such as theirs in due time chilled other social waters. Upper New York, as far as it recognized the young artist at all, gradually decided that his pictures might be bought, but that he himself was to be left in the list of mere street acquaintance; and Rodney rebelled at all this in direct and indiscreet proportion to his recognition of his own folly, and his knowledge of some limited degree of innocence. Nancy was, after all, but a sign in his mind; but the sign was of portent, for Rodney well knew that his real self was growing smaller and forlorn every day. Amoret had been the dream; Robert Rodney was the daylit fact. To Amoret's level he had not risen, apparently could not rise. It was some grim comfort, perhaps, to feel that his chance meeting with her had prevented him from falling to any lower plane of moral inanition.

Society, indeed, had banished him in part, and had banished him for one of the most innocent things he ever did, — as innocent,

in its way, as his walks and talks with Amoret. Very well, he would banish society, that artificial conglomeration that so readily forgave decorous rascality, but was inexorable toward superficial impropriety. But Amoret? Was she right in what she had said of occasional disloyalty to one's best self? Was he ever loyal to his best self? Perhaps not; but from the froth of his good moods or quick perceptions he was constantly painting, so folks said, sweet things that seemed to help the world's sympathies and tendernesses. For a castaway to preach to others was better than not to preach at all. Perhaps what he needed was something like the conversion which the old preachers used to urge when they shouted the loudest. Well, conversion had never come to him. What was it that old Mr. Welby was saying so oracularly the other day? "Nobody is so fettered as he who thinks himself freest." If that is the condition of life, so be it; there are some minor mitigations; maybe somebody will like to look at one of my pictures when the painter is gone. Yes, the stream rises higher than its source.

Two things constantly reverted to Rodney's mind all that winter and spring, even when he was working with all his might, and

thereby making uncared-for money faster than ever.

One was Nancy. The little canary outlived its owner, and sang as happily as ever for the two days that the dead body of the Diana of east London lay in splendid state in the low-ceiled attic room on Bleecker street. There was neither romance nor tragedy in her departure — she only died. The barn-like stage of a Philadelphia theatre, one raw December night, had been full of draughts that chilled the girl to the bone. Some of the men in front did not throw off their over-coats, but her attire was merely poetical. Shivering, she came home to New York, and promptly succumbed to pneumonia; "lung fever," poor Mrs. Crackenby called it. "Things is allers 'appenin' to we," she added, between her begrimed tears and choky sobs. An actors' benevolent fund paid the expenses of the burial and sent the mother back to fight the squalid London battle once more; but somebody bought a pretty lot in Woodlawn, and set up a costly runic cross bearing but two initials, "N. C.," and one date; while along its foot were carved the words: "And lead us not into temptation."

The other thing that Rodney thought of after Nancy ended, was the matter of the

letters to Amoret. The first of his epistles was written three weeks after Rodney's return to New York, nor did the irregular correspondence cease; but Amoret never felt that she was lastingly successful in helping him to discover his better self.

Perhaps it was ten years later that Rodney painted his masterpiece, "Taedium Vitae." A girl lay alone on a bankside whose crushed flowers were fading, her white face languorously turned toward the thickening night. The supple beauty of the weary white limbs was Nancy's, but the far-off look in the eyes was Amoret's.

V.

THE SURGE OF THE SEA.

HALF a hundred miles to the southward of Amoret's birth-home, sea, earth, and sky disport themselves in many a mood, the twelvemonth long. The rocky coast juts forth in peaked headlands, or arrays long lines of beetling cliffs against the constant boom of the winter waves. Off shore, in the long curves of the bay, lie a hundred islands; some fair and fertile, tiny continents in themselves; others bare and bleak, mere points in the watery chaos. The mainland is deeply indented with shady creeks and shallow inlets; on the low marshes grows a plentiful crop of salt hay, while the higher shores are fringed to the water's edge by pines and beeches whose leaves drop into the tide. The farmer mows his meadows far down to the pebbly strand or the ragged rocks, and the salty odors of the ocean mingle with the fragrance of the hay-cocks and the bay-bushes. The swish of the quieter waves is indistinguishable from

the soft rush of the air through the odorous needles of the pine; and the atmosphere which at dawn was thick with fog shines at noonday with a stereoscopically clear but not heat-giving glare. August is June in that sweet climate, but a June that may relapse into memories of April or anticipate the chill of October. The cow-bell tinkles in accord with the faint sound of the bell-buoy at the edge of the channel; and the lighthouse beyond the abandoned fort welcomes the fees of the vacation pedestrian with the same zeal with which it flares its warning into the straining eyes of the weary sailor as he works his way into port.

It was more than a year after Amoret met Rodney on the hill that she stood, once more alone, on the cliff just north of the light, and looked out to sea. It was cool but not cold, warm but not hot; wild roses and half-dried fern-bushes were her pleasant neighbors,—indeed, the only neighbors save a ruminant cow that stood in sleepy silence on the grassy parapet of the disused breastwork. To Amoret, nature was always a friend and companion, a mirror and a mentor. And now—save for one unrecognized and unconfessed undertone — the intense local atmosphere pervaded her very being with a sense of which some deep

inner content was the only perceptible thing. Yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow were one, and all were good; the time and the scene made her so much in love with life that she was perfectly willing to die, knowing that she could not lose herself in what the world calls death. What though a rose-leaf fell, dislodged by the sluggish breeze, and made its final little journey to earth? Was the lapsing wave troubled that it could never be its own self again in the multiplying years? Nowhere else does the eternal in the transient so pervade the mind as beside the hundred-tinted, the thousand-voiced ocean. "All is," it seems to say.

Winter had slowly melted into spring, and down in the valley the stumpy little willows, which were shorn of their beauty last year that its dainty yellow might be blackened into charcoal, saw their ugly, despoiled selves in the tiny two-foot stream that ran in and out amongst them, trying, with its soothing chatter, to console them for the pitiful picture its honest little bosom so plainly showed. So their brightening stems and soft new catkins waved the banners of the season of resurrection in the dawn of a northern summer.

A temporary change had come over the little household above the bookstore. Amoret

was twenty, and had twenty ambitions; her tireless patience in that most fretting of tasks, the music teacher's, could not make many dollars, what with the meagre rates of payment then in vogue in provincial towns; while the old man's business across the counter was plainly getting slenderer. Respectability must increasingly make that most pathetic of struggles, — a downhill fight with poverty. A bustling rival across the way had rented a shop, put in a plate-glass window with never a wooden shutter at night, and filled it with gaudy pictures and toys, trashy Saturday weeklies that purveyed cheap fiction to sewing-girls, and even the horrible sheets that hebdomadally displayed lurid representations of prize-fights, robberies, and assassinated females. Into the sale of this wretched "literature" Mr. Welby could not go; to him his traffic was a matter of conscience, and he half despaired of the republic when he reflected that the younger part of Bellwood was actually patronizing his new neighbor, and ignoring the old publishing-house of half a century's standing. It was not the loss of the poor little money that vexed him; it was the possible flitting of the self-respect of the ancient community that he had served for a lifetime, as boy and man, and quietly loved.

Meanwhile his best patron died ; the value of the plentiful first editions on his shelves was as yet undreamed of ; and Amoret, with more regrets and more quavers than she let her grandfather know, made up her mind to earn her own living and send something home to Bellwood. Flat amazement and definite denial gradually yielded to her resolution and common-sense. A second cousin in the city by the island-dotted bay offered her a home and a chance to teach music and literature in her eminently respectable and fairly successful school for girls ; and still another ancient relative, lame, kindly, and efficient, was temporarily installed as Mr. Welby's housekeeper. So Amoret began to try to show the world that it ought to give her some few dollars in return for various large ideas concerning Tennyson and Beethoven. What other exchange could she ask ? A woman could hardly preach or plead ; authorship was uncertain, and day-labor hard on one's back. Teaching and housekeeping were almost all that were left to think of.

The parting was hard enough, for all that Amoret had cheerily said about the trifle of sixty miles, a monthly run up the river, a letter every Sunday, and the nearness of the telegraph office to the old book-store. But

there would, at any rate, be no woes of the uncertain sort to encounter; Cousin Lodema Tetley was too good and too self-respecting, albeit a little cold, to permit Amoret to endure any Bronte experiences in her new position; and she rose to a state almost of cheerfulness — just as she got on the train and left the poor old philosopher disconsolate on the platform — by the thought that if this scheme failed she would come straight home, contract the book-store into half its quarters, take possession of the other half herself, astonish Bellwood with millinery such as it never dreamed of, and quit teaching forever. Amoret knew that she had taste and tact enough to make her living as a milliner, if worse came to worse. Her bonnets and hats and draperies were the prettiest she knew of; she had deftly designed the headgear of many an impecunious or tasteless friend, getting something out of nothing in a marvellous way; and she grimly felt that she would yet make people pay for this sort of thing, rather than starve or see Mr. Welby's thin face get to look worried in its old age. Indeed, her willingness to work was catholic. Two avenues of financial gain, however, she regarded as permanently closed, — stealing and keeping boarders. A teacher may be patronized or

dismissed by the community; but a milliner, with strong ideas and a hundred dollars ahead, has that community at its mercy. And then, by and by, *The Philosophy of Life* and her own book of poems could be published from the proceeds, — mammon should serve the muses! All this was laughingly whispered by the poet to the philosopher through the car-window, just before the train left the station and began to pass the familiar objects with an increasing speed that finally rose to an average of no less than twenty-five miles an hour.

Miss Tetley's school occupied a great square house on the aristocratic street of the seaport city, just where the thoroughfare began to slope down to the wharves and the harbor. It had been built in the days of the merchant princes, before the Embargo. Above its third high wooden story the roof was bordered by a heavy railing, reproducing in little the classical fashion of the fence whose partially decayed urn-topped wooden pillars surrounded the generous yard. The window-glass was of the largest size purchasable in 1800; the front door was embellished by an enormous brass knocker, still of use because of the habitual incertitude of the adjoining bell-wire; while within the spacious hall and generous rooms of the mansion were the mahogany chairs,

the majestic but impracticable sofas, the locked book-cases, and the silver candlesticks of the date when the establishment was set up. Over the carved and white painted mantel of the parlor hung a portrait of Sir William Pepperell, the lurid hue of whose generous cheeks matched that of his equally generous waistcoat.

The house was deliciously cool in summer, never thoroughly warmed in winter, and distinctly melancholy in rainy weather, when, like some people, it radiated an air of respectable discomfort. But Amoret was by no means lonesome in her new habitation. Aside from her own soul and the friendly companionship of birds, flowers, and hills, she had never known of any environment save that of decadent respectability. In that she slept and ate; but in Nature and in the cool corners of her own aloof personality was her real existence. Indeed, the distinctly and sometimes powerfully marine atmosphere of the bay city, with its morning fogs and its afternoon whiffs from the shallow coves to the westward, seemed only to intensify that effect of ancient quietude, of severance from things definitely new or modern, in which her life had been spent. The shifting sea, after all, appears more changeless than the immovable mountains of the

cloud-swept inner country, and is better able to make to-day seem a long time ago.

In Miss Tetley's school Amoret's duties had begun in the spring, nor had they ceased when the summer term closed at its old-fashioned July date. The school was a successful one, but while mere prosperity always seemed to Amoret rather vulgar, she could not object to the quiet and decorous way in which Miss Tetley's twenty boarders and sixty day scholars paid their goodly moneys for instruction that was by no means superficial. Miss Tetley's brain and birth and tact were alike unquestionable, and she knew it, and knew that others knew it; therefore the dignified transfer of accomplishments for dollars hurt nobody's pride, and distinctly increased the sum-total of self-satisfaction in the community. It may be doubted whether the world can show a higher average of civilization than that of the strip of seacoast from the Penobscot to the Hudson; but it is no matter of doubt that the best representative of that civilization is the New England woman over thirty years of age. That Miss Tetley was of such maturity nobody questioned.

To Amoret was assigned the duty of teaching rhetoric, English literature, and piano-playing; an old German, who came in three

times a week, took charge of vocal music. Her success was instantaneous, though it had been seriously questioned before her arrival from the vague region known as "up the river." The girls, with the deferential and unjealous adoration they often bestow upon older persons of their own sex, at once declared her ravishingly beautiful; nor could there be any question as to the knowledge of solecisms, of Kubla Khan, or of counterpoint possessed by one who dressed with such divine simplicity that you never could tell how it was done, though you looked at her for the entire forty-four minutes when you were not reciting. Thus, though the tale of Amoret's toils as teacher would be more romantic if adorned by accounts of trials and persecutions wrought by employer and scholar on a sensitive soul, she was fortunate from the start, and there is nothing more to say.

Indeed, Amoret was in no true sense sensitive. If anything displeased her, she wished to avoid it forever; if she could not, she made it dwell in the suburbs of her good pleasure, and consoled herself with her inner resources and her next outing.

So spring had become summer; and Amoret, with some money in her purse and some memories of success in her head, had made the first

of her little visits to the old home, finding Grandfather Welby still lonesome, but more industrious than ever in the small affairs of the venerable shop, and happier than of yore in the accumulation of notes for the great work. Indeed, he had taken large though theoretically melancholy satisfaction in making some data of his recent regrets for the loss of Amoret, thus: —

Absence is true presence; we think of people but when they are out of sight.

Experience comes high, but it pays.

Three things show an infinite variety in a changeless unity: the sea, the sky, and woman's love.

Or, in unconscious egotism, after such entries as these last: —

The author turns for his readers the leaves of the book of his brain.

He meditated somewhat more than usual, it is true, on death; and came to a newly realized sense that he was getting to be a tolerably old man. Of his demise and its consequences he had no real fear in any case. Being Amoret's grandfather, he would have been ashamed to show it. Indeed, in her absence he made to a

still more ancient contemporary one slightly vicious remark which he would hardly have ventured to utter to her of whose clear spiritual insight he stood somewhat in awe. "I never asked to be born," said he; "I have tried to live a decent life; and God is as much responsible for my getting out as for my coming in."

"Yes," replied old Hendrickson, the grocer; "but I'm glad to have had my chance." When Mr. Welby got back to his desk he was a little ashamed of his seeming cynicism, and thought Hendrickson had the better of the colloquy, until, re-reading one of his own manuscript dicta, he reflected that his old friend had probably got his idea from himself. As far as death went, Mr. Welby's chief regrets were two: first, that the world might crowd Amoret; second, and more selfish and personal, the thought that he must leave his few pet old books in the corner that were not for sale. From this mood came the entry, dashed down in a sort of defiance of the fact that it was unaxiomatically diffuse in its wording, and not original at that:—

Art is long, but the book-lover's time is fleeting; as he passes the shelf and furtively pats his loved volumes there comes a whisper in a drear corner of his brain: "Nunc mihi, mox aliis."

Indeed, in one of these days of blueness the philosopher certainly twitted on facts when he recorded the observation: —

Death rids us, sooner or later, of many whom we dislike ; but it also, unluckily, takes us out of the way of some who dislike us.

All this cynicism, however, was but skin-deep ; it did not permeate his being more than does the pleasant-sour tang of that honest fruit, the bellflower apple. In his real self Thomas Welby was a sweet old sunny soul ; but sweetness is not insipidity, and sunshine would be naught without shadow. Perhaps, however, he never reached a nobler height of altruism than when he came to say — and even half to believe : —

Gathering books is good, but scattering them is better : to each reader his chosen few.

Amoret's run to Bellwood could not be prolonged to any considerable time, for her stately employer intimated, in a way that might be interpreted as a command, that she could return if she chose, and spend the vacation in superintending the reading and the French of a few ladies, beyond "school age," summering in the adjoining coast village,

wherein Miss Tetley herself had a modest cottage. This suggestion meant an additional stipend which Amoret could not afford to lose; and since all her absences from Bellwood were for financial reasons, she felt that she had no right to say no; for things in her grandfather's simple domestic establishment were going well enough, and in the book-shop no worse than usual. But the week at home had certainly been pleasant; the villagers showed the increased respect they felt for one reputed to be getting good wages in the State metropolis; and her visit was dignified by the actual production, after all the years, of the veritable volume of *The Philosophy of Life*, from which the dear old sage read a few entries with a combination of modesty and didacticism, of maidenliness and *sagesse*, that made Amoret love him better than ever. "You can *not*," she exclaimed with vocal italicization, "love what you don't respect unless the element of pity creeps in, and that's the way you love a bird: you patronize it. I'm glad, dear granddaddy, that I don't have to pretend to love you just because you're a relative; that's the dreariest lie in the world."

So it was that, after her return, Amoret found herself, for the first time in her life, a seaside summerer, with two months more of the

green ocean as her recreation, and two months more of fat-handed women as her duty. And the day when she stood alone on the cliff — like a bright statue of eternal-womanly above the perennial surge — she had turned her back upon Miss Lodema, the personages whose brains she was expected to veneer, and all the rest of the cottagers, in order to have one whole long day all by herself. She was still, in essentials, the little girl of the graveyard ; she must withdraw, now and then, from " man with his wasty ways," and live for a few hours with her heart-beats for companion and the butterflies and the grasses for teachers. Nor was the change abrupt from the graves of her girlhood to the waves of to-day : each was instinct with life in a sense not true of the crowds on the city sidewalk.

Clambering over the earthworks, with their huge semi-circular foundations for cannon that never fired a shot, Amoret left the cows to their unæsthetic nibbles earthward and stupid blinks seaward, and picked her way to a crevice, half down the cliff, which she had already made a favorite seat. A little piece of driftwood formed a good bottom for the chair ; the rocks were so shaped as to make a back, while immediately in front jutted an irregular up-sloping plane of weather-seamed stone, surrounded

at every high tide, but easily accessible at low water. This rock-slope terminated in a point that got splashed by the more ambitious waves when wind and tide were right,— a point that Amoret christened the Pope's Nose, according to a habit she had never outgrown. From her earliest childhood a certain personality had seemed to her to inhere in half the objects she saw — houses had characters of their own, windows looked like faces, chimneys were solemn, hills were meditative, brooks talked to themselves, rivers were untrustworthy, roads beckoned, and trees, if less than human, were more than animal. As for the ocean, it was the universal solvent, the catholic language, whispering some of the secrets of eternity. Yet if it was the cathedral of reason in this unsuperstitious age, why not adorn its edges with gargoyles and sportive sculptures? Nature furnished the decorative carvings, she would give the names.

Somehow, by the sea, one can do nothing, that is to say everything, for hours and hours without weariness or satiety. If nature does not bore herself as man does, it is because she fills her round of daily tasks without any hateful set of rules, nor does she ever look at a watch or a calendar. Some days, such as this of Amoret's in her seat under the cliff, the soul

goes on and on in the unmethodical progressiveness, the irregular unity, of nature herself.

What Amoret began to think of she could not tell any more than the bay-bushes and ferns over her head; she merely kept on like them, and in the same way. Maybe they knew more than she did, for they did not quarrel with their environment or their time of being, and when they died they died. Perhaps they knew they were luckier than their fellows a mile inland, but perhaps they did n't. Plants have to suffer, but so do minerals; the wave eats the cliff, and then itself evaporates. Suffering is change, and change is life; indeed, there is a sort of likeness between force and existence. But force never makes an individual, and one single true vitality, whatever it is, has a character that no amount of mere activity can possess. We know it, and so does the lower animal, when we look each other straight in the eye. It is the oneness of the soul for which we two are searching in that look; number or fewness of volts or kilos does not form a soul. So Homer and the Edda-writers used to make a brook into a little divinity, and a man into a big one, and think they had settled it all. Their gods and goddesses were rather meaner than common folks; but what of it? We have to make more excuses nowadays for presidents

and princes than for sewing-women or blacksmiths. So Amoret thought, and she went on and on, —

“ Dear me, what a lovely curve that gull made as he swooped between the schooner and the island! What fun it must be to fly! Poor things, *we* can’t boast, as long as we can’t keep ourselves one minute one inch above the earth by willing it. Gulls and fish-hawks can see better than we; dirty bats, too, for that matter. Everything can do something better than anything else can. A dog can run faster than Chaucer, smell a world Shakespeare never knew, and crunch a bone that would tax the tooth of time. Oh! that was the first splash on the Pope’s Nose. What a lazy, tricky whirlpool out over that sunken ledge! I wonder whether I’d rather be drowned or slowly swallowed in a quicksand. One would have time enough for a death-bed repentance in the latter case. Indians used to bury each other in the sand up to the neck, over night, for smallpox, — or did they ever have the smallpox? — and once the foxes came and ate off the heads of two or three. I suppose death stared them in the face. What would folks think of us if we said everything we think! How easy it is for us to philosophize when we are happy ourselves? What was it grandpa

was saying the other day? — *Severity is easily endurable when it falls on somebody else.* But I'm sure I'm sorry enough for everything. Once when I was a little girl I waked up with my face wet with tears, and when I had cried for an hour, and grandpa asked what was the matter, I said, 'the sins of the world.' I must have gone to church the day before.

"That swirl over the rock reminds me of the time when I had to drown a poor little kitten I could n't find a mother for, or make drink milk. The mystery of death! We don't know much more, after all, than the monkey some one told me of, that was so puzzled when he closed his paw and accidentally killed a fly he had been watching therein; then he handed it to a by-standing woman, with a pathetic look in his simian eye, as much as to say: 'Tell me about that life that is n't; where is it now?' The day I drowned the kitten was the first time I ever read the line 'Our little life is rounded with a sleep.' Anybody could have said that; I believe one is as good a poet as another, if he spoke out; and thinking is better than speaking. The only trouble is that the old cow up there looks as though she had deeper thoughts than I do. Stagnation is n't thought; neither is buzzy activity, for that matter. Thinking and doing are the left

hand and the right, — might put that into shape and give it to grandpa for his book, — or they 're the brain and the hand. Most people have hands and no brains; some have brains and no hands.

" Oh ! there 's a butterfly in the surf, — just like a soul caught and whirled to its fate by this great rolling world ; I wonder whether we ought to be sorrier for the butterfly or the surf.

" I wish we did n't have backs ; there, that 's more comfortable. I wonder why these off-shore fishermen like to row face-forward ; that man has to sit so, to steer, and manage his sail. How much has he caught ? Is he going home to his wife ? I hope he 'll be good to her. Some of these common folks get a good deal of comfort out of being married. There can't be much of the ideal about it, but at least there is a sort of humdrum friendship, while it lasts ; and then she dies and he marries again. Two things are sure in this world : death and second marriages. But I 'd rather be a good friend than a poor lover. I would have to love anybody — man or woman — *ever* so much to endure him at all, every day, year after year ; but if I did, it would be because I really liked him, and liked to be with him. And that, if you mean twenty years together, come weal come woe, is friendship, and friendship is love.

The friend of God: what a lot God must know! his friendship would be worth while. I wonder if anybody loves Mr. Morland, and he loves anybody,—you can't forget his face, any way.

“This is getting rather warm, but the breeze is cool. What a perfect smell! I don't see why smelling isn't as legitimate as seeing. Who was it that said he wanted to die to escape the tyranny of the three dimensions? I suppose if I made that remark to Miss Morfax to-morrow morning it would be about as intelligible as the Russian she says she is ‘just crazy to learn.’ She'd be crazy before she got it learned. What fun it will be just after we die! out of space, out of time, sans teeth, sans everything, without the vexation of our bodies. That is like what I heard Mr. Morland say to Mrs. Catherwood at the reception. How pretty she is, for a widow. Why should n't widows be pretty? they ought to have got more out of life than the rest of us. ‘Does n't it make you shiver to think of dying, Mr. Morland?’ said she; ‘to think of going all alone you don't know where?’ And Mr. Morland turned his face down to hers with a far-away look—he is taller than most of us—and his only words were: ‘No one can be more lonely in the next world than in this; our own

bodies are far outside our real selves.' I don't think Mrs. Catherwood understood him; she merely flashed her blue eyes, with a little smile, and said 'Oh, Mr. Morland!' which might mean anything. I never saw anybody just like him; he seems a poet out of a story-book, or an old-time, gentle knight strayed into our days, a sort of womanly man or manly woman — what is the difference? At any rate, I am glad he is he, if I never see him again; there are so many common-place people in the world that one likes to meet somebody that is different. I am sure he *is* different. He reminds me a little of Robert, for the very reason that he is so unlike him; he has n't Robert's dash and fire and superficial foolishness. Mind and not body — imagine Robert's making such a remark as that!"

Amoret left her rocky perch, went and picked a few leaves of bay and fern, crushed them in her fingers for the fragrance, sat down in the afternoon shade east of the fort, and looked — one would have said — far out to sea; but she was really staring at a new figure on the horizon of life.

Henry Morland was a man at whom street-passers not infrequently gave a second glance; a fact which he well knew, while never giving the slightest hint of the knowledge. But his

notableness was very unlike Rodney's. If Amoret had thought of him and Rodney in the same mood, it was, as she said to herself, but for contrast; for of Rodney's radiant animalism Morland had not a trace. Tall, dark, thin, he had seemed to Amoret, on first view, to personate mind in a material world. His rather low but broad forehead was surmounted and surrounded by black hair. The eyes were far apart; the nose not small, and of an outward arch; the lips thin and delicate, suggesting in their ordinary expression a mood of reticent firmness that most men reserve for occasions of some significance; and the hands and feet like a Cuban's. Perhaps his most notable characteristic at first glance was a monotonous pallor of complexion, as of the smoothness and softness of porcelain, but suggesting delicacy of disposition rather than any tendency toward ill-health.

Morland and Amoret had first met at an in-door party late in the social season, before the summer cessation of festivities. The two had been bestowing upon others the chit-chat which neither liked, but both deemed necessary in the interchange of superficial civilities, — a sort of small coin of the market-place, far outside the temple of life. Neither condescended, then or ever, to the discussion of

thermometrical, barometrical, or hygrometrical conditions; but each was willing to inquire, in deferential interest that did not pretend to be profound, concerning the length of time people had remained in Harborwood, and the comparative intensity of their satisfaction with the topography and society of the seaboard town.

A general "party" or reception is an amusement to the many, a despair to the few, and an opportunity to some. Before Morland was presented to Amoret, each had been studying the gathering with equal interest, if from different motives. Morland, with the journalist's and critic's inveterate habit of external comment, was quietly noting a few absurdities of appearance or incongruities of dress, and was amusing himself with the thought that years dealt indifferently with some men and women who had seemed old to him in his boyhood days, nor appeared more ancient now. In the same observant temper he was watching for new faces, and two attracted his unexcitable notice. One was that of a fairly successful novelist from another city,—tall, large, blonde, voluble, forty; the other was Amoret, who could lay claim to none of these terms.

The social function had reached its middle stage; the first scattering arrivals had been re-

inforced by rapidly accumulating recruits from the dressing-rooms; refreshments had not yet been served; and numerous groups were talking and laughing in a roar which, though endurable, was not in all respects more agreeable than the atmosphere of the rooms, heavily laden with the odor of strong half-wilted flowers and miscellaneous perfumes from the toilet table. Amoret had never before been present at so large or so ambitious a gathering; and the effect of her inner sense of modest inexperience was to give her an external air of superiority. Nobody in the world seems so haughty as he or she who is most timid; a feebleness at times almost despairing assumes the form of conscious pride or visible dislike. Amoret's look that night was perhaps nothing more than her habitual flower-like indifference to beholders; rooted in nature, she instinctively turned her face skyward, not manward; but it was enough to puzzle Morland, to whom her simplicity was a stronger magnet than the dominant personality of the blonde novelist, though that popular personage was one who never appeared anywhere without seeming to say, "I am here," — she pre-supposed a public, and Morland had no doubt that she attitudinized even at the desk where she wrote her florid but effective stories of the relations be-

tween a polyonomous *her* and an erratic *him*. Morland had written reviews of more than one of her books, and his memory now flattered him that those reviews had been as kindly as the novels warranted; at least his judgment had not been unconsciously warped by any anticipatory knowledge of her insistent personality.

After this little preliminary study Morland was sure that if he talked with his fellow-author for long she would find him out, and turn the conversation straight toward her own advantage as a future maker of books; and so there was some personal desire for self-preservation in his request to be presented, instead, to the dark and interesting newcomer. The better part of the chat that followed was one that Amoret recalled, word by word, as she looked seaward and unconsciously made Morland the dream-figure on the far sky-line of the green ocean.

"Miss Wenton," he had said, "my evening would have been incomplete without this honor."

"One meets whom one wishes to meet, sooner or later, in this life," replied Amoret, with a pretty turn of the head and a prettier look in her eyes, as she lifted a round arm and fixed a stray little lock of hair on the back of her head.

The cryptic reply might have been deemed as light as Morland's was merely conventional; but each felt some undercurrent of truth in his or her part of the little dialogue, which gave the few words a new significance, and started the following conversation far in advance of the usual beginning point of society chatter. The king's pawn had merely moved two squares forward, but the serious play was quickly on, and the queen was in the game. Amoret's pleasure in the talk was that of an innocence so childish as to be impenetrable, while Morland's subtle compliments became more than superficial because of the evident sincerity of his interest in his new acquaintance. To have noticed little things is the most irresistible of minor flatteries; and each had been watching the other,—a fact which Amoret instinctively concealed and Morland judiciously made known. And as the subsequent days went on, it was his minute remembrance of her unconsidered trifles that surprised Amoret most, while Morland was best pleased by the novelty of the girl's point of view, and her way of setting forth her own thoughts.

To Amoret, in her day by the sea, there came back, accordingly, every detail of this, their first talk, in the ten minutes before the blonde novelist came swooping into their little

cove-nook of intelligence like a ferry-boat among wherries, ending it all save for a scant minute at parting. They had spoken of roses and violets; of "In Memoriam," and the tiresomeness of standing for two hours; of the waste of time in reading daily papers, and of a late concert of the Mendelssohn Quintette Club. From the last, to Morland's amazement and Amoret's delight, the talk had drifted into the deep discussion — how should it be described in simple words? — of the correlation and transmutation of the forces of æsthetic communication between mind and mind: what smell and taste could suggest, and whether a symphony could tell a story or a painting sing a song. Morland had quoted some hackneyed lines on the subject; but the lines, and he himself, had been made commonplace in his own mind by the girl's quick citation of Shelley's -

"land

Where music and moonlight and feeling are one."

Frivolity and giggle were all around them in the crowded and uncomfortable room; but in a far corner these two chance wanderers in the wilderness of inanity had happened upon a topic which each had often thought of, but seldom broached.

“I suppose,” said Morland, “that if we have any existence at all beyond this life, we shall have little need of the senses we most employ here, and shall make most use of mere dim feeling between soul and soul.”

“Angelic eyes, and noses, and tongues, and fingers and ears will all become one sense of apprehension then,” said Amoret.

“Don’t you think there is a little truth in telepathy, Miss Wenton?” said Morland.

“I suppose so,” said she, “underneath a great deal of humbug and coincidence. How strange it is when we feel that we’ve been in a place before, and heard the very same things said, though the chances are all against it.”

“And stranger still,” said Morland, “when one knows just what somebody else is going to say.”

“It’s partly,” said Amoret, “that we have so few ideas and not many words, and must come back to the old things. Don’t you remember the nursery jingle, —

“‘We eat and drink and sleep, and then
We eat and drink and sleep again?’

That’s all some folks’ life amounts to.”

“I know it,” said he; “but, as you say, coincidence hardly accounts for it all. I think

I feel this sense more when talking with intelligent people on out-of-the-way themes."

"Do you have it now?" said Amoret. "Our themes are out-of-the-way, I am sure," and as she looked at his deep eyes, she was instantly ashamed of seeming to trifle,—a tiny vexation that raised Morland in her esteem, and belittled herself in her own mind for a fortnight afterward.

"I wish I *could* think I ever had so full a ten minutes before in some previous state," said Morland, with a pleasant smile; and just then the impressive novelist descended on the pair, and the hostess brought a callow collegian to present to Amoret. Morland was thirty-eight; but Amoret, from babyhood, had always liked antiquity. It was an hour afterward, in the hall, when Morland got a chance to say: "Miss Tetley is a valued friend of mine; I hope I may see you, too, the next time I dislocate the bell-wire or pound the great brass knocker. Time, you know, is good for nothing save as a memory or a hope;" and the quiet face was brightened by a still smile that Amoret suddenly compared, in her mind, with Robert's old-time laughs, and the latter seemed very far away.

As for Morland's farewell words, they came back to her again and again, as she looked

seaward: "Time is good for nothing save as a memory or a hope." A memory, or a hope,—that had never been her idea of the days and years; they had been one long and delightsome procession of present moments,—even the absence of her grandfather had not left them empty, and certainly Robert's had not, though she often gave him a regretful thought, for all her life she had wished he was different. But now, for some new reason that she could not understand, she had spent half the afternoon in thinking about that chance meeting at the party, and in wondering when the old brass knocker would sound. The worst of it was that Miss Tetley had almost immediately transferred herself to the seaside cottage, and perhaps he had come and gone, and the knocks had but echoed through the emptiness of the great square rooms.

The sun set; the darkness deepened; night shut down; the broken cliffs grew black; and the sea, whose roar and splash had been company during the day, took another tone and moaned drearily. Then it was, the while the two great lights at the extremities of the long island began to glow like huge candlesticks on either end of an altar to Neptune, that Amoret wrote the last lines of a sonnet she had begun long ago in her river home. As her pencil

closed its work in the gloom, and she turned to go, she thought she was thinking only of the illimitable ocean.

AFTER DEATH.

When I forthfare beyond this narrow earth,
With all its metes and bounds of now and here,
And brooding clouds of ignorance and fear
That overhung me on my day of birth,
Wherethrough the jocund sun's perennial mirth
Has shone more inly bright each coming year,
With some new glory of that outer sphere
Where length and breadth and height are little worth,
Then shall I find that even here below
We guessed the secret of eternity,
And learned in years the yearless mystery;
For in our earliest world we came to know
The master-lesson and the riddle's key:
Unending love unending growth shall be.

VI.

AN HEIR OF THE AGES.

THE congregation of the dead awaits the pilgrims of life, and the grave is the second cradle of man. We came from our own and we go to our own, bearing the burden of sins before our birth, and borne on the wings of the hopes of our ancestors. Our grandfathers' faces peer back from our mirrors, and our very voices are those that once came from lips now dust. Yet we shall not be damned for Adam's sin, nor saved by a mother's virtues.

Man's brain is most vexed by the problem of self, so he seeks to shirk it by throwing it on somebody else. Once it was laid on the priest, now it falls on the environment. But the old Spanish philosopher summed our case when he said: "Blood is an inheritance, virtue an acquisition." Our bodies are no more than the hands and feet of the soul. Life is an eternal now, an unending triumph over death, if so we will make it. If we fall away it is

because we yield hold; neither God nor man may push us off. The human mind, indeed, comprehends neither infinitude nor limitation of life, of space, of time, of matter; it staggers at the thought of something, nothing, self, the rest; it sometimes calls good bad and bad good. But light shines on the origin of ill because of the glory of freedom and triumph by choice. Mere liberty has no room for God, mere foreordination makes man a puppet; we know there is a shaping power, and we also know we are free.

When Henry Morland was a boy in an up-country village, however, he thought there were ten compelling fates and one poor little sprite of freedom in his narrow world. The care that others showed him seemed a kind of immitigable cruelty, and whenever, in boyish fashion, he resolved to be his own be and do his own do, he seemed forced into petty and wayward rebellion. The neighbors said he was moody, but his parents thought he had a strong will, and were glad that his bookish tastes saved them from frequent necessity to "break" it. He could read at five, by ten he knew nearly all the books behind the glass doors of the mahogany cases, and at fifteen the little town library in an upper room of the academy building was housed in his own head

as well. Boys and girls acquire the reading habit then or never; and little Morland followed the fortunes of the Faerie Queene as well as Mr. Abbott's Napoleon, and could locate Inchcape Rock as accurately as the Sugarloaf of his own village. Caring little for scud, or prisoners' base, or three old cat, or swimming, or horseback riding, or the rude gymnasium of the academy, his one physical triumph lay in his long legs, which could run a race faster than those of any boy in the county town. And his acquaintance, young and old, excused peculiarities that were perverse, perhaps, but seldom vicious or sullen, by saying "Henry's a great reader," as though that settled everything.

But the boy's book-loving tastes had at least given him ability to compare the actual with the fanciful, and in a lazy way he appreciated some part of the beauties of his environment. The long village of one street, whence strayed a few minor thoroughfares at right angles, rested on the top of a great truncated cone. Around the town, straggling off into the eastward meadows in many an intricate S or graceful C, was the eccentric little river, subdividing the hayfields into divers patterns, and demanding a log bridge, here and there, for the farmers' ways. In spring

the sluggish stream overflowed the surrounding acres, and in the long winter, save when, as usually happened, it was covered with snow, it stretched a vitreous floor for the muffled skaters. But the glory of Reedville was the great irregular line of mountains to the westward, running north and south in majestic superiority to the white steeple of the Congregational church or the modest brick tower of the academy. In the morning their bare tops caught the first thin, shivering rod of sunlight, and in the late evening their dark contour, like that of a row of huge transported pyramids, shocked and distorted by an earthquake, bordered the deepening purple of the sky. Most of the farmers regarded them as so much possibly productive woodland, for their eastern sides were occasionally seamed by chutes down which great logs were slid in favorable winters; while the villagers' daughters viewed them as huge blueberry pastures, yielding five cents a quart or three by the bushel, and demanding patience, sugar, and stained-handedness in the doing-up. To young Morland these outlying peaks of a greater range were neither the delectable mountains of a joyous imagination, nor the prosaic neighbors of an unintelligent mind.

If Henry was a reader, it was because the

world of books was larger than that of Reedville, and because books never annoyed him by intrusiveness or misapprehension, the two great banes of childhood. To be misjudged or wrongly blamed, to be obliged to make a timid explanation, or to rest in undeserved though perhaps tacit condemnation,—these things make childhood's alleged joyousness a time out of which the struggles or woes of middle life give a blessed deliverance, for we are at least freed from the supervision of official and officious inspectors whose knowledge may or may not be greater than ours, but whose tastes and sympathies are surely not identical with our own.

The townspeople, when they said that the boy was a great reader, gave the reasons that his parents were such superior persons: the father, a calm, cool, spectacled lawyer, who shaved his upper-lip Sundays and Wednesdays and sat for the rest of the week in the little brick office at the farther corner of the garden; the mother, a mild, timid, flat-chested excellence with attenuated gray curls over her ears, two straight wrinkles all across her forehead, a perpetual wonder what husband thought about it, and a constant worried apprehension lest something should happen to Henry. The despots are not all in mid-Asia, and Squire Mor-

land ruled in that most torturous of tyrannies: a sense of incertitude as to his majesty's pleasure in house and what was called home. Mrs. Morland did not dream, for forty years, that she came nearest a sort of negative happiness when her husband had left her and gone to sit alone among his calf-bound law-books in the one-story office and dispense remunerative equity in his capacity of incorruptible executor and estate-lawyer for half the county; but Henry was well aware that his own freedom was best found when an open book lay in his lap, and his father was somewhere else. The squire never interrupted him then, for he felt that the boy was following the intellectual bent of the family far better than his older sister, who, by the law of contraries one sometimes sees in this crooked world, was the plump and jolly wife of a well-to-do merchant, deemed rather below her in social station, — and the mother of two rollicking babies. Everybody had always said that sister Helen's was just like the roly-poly face of her great grandmother, in the be-capped painting that hung at the turn of the front staircase. So Time wreaks his jocose revenges.

Of course Henry went to college in due season, after he had gone through his Greek reader and six books of Virgil in the academy.

Fitting for college and keeping at the head of his little and dwindling class was easy enough, and as his instructor was one of the faithful classicists of the last generation, content to labor for a lifetime at eight hundred a year without dreams of a professorship or a higher salary or a "wider sphere," the boy went well prepared to the famous old institution where his father had graduated thirty years before. If his mathematics were a little insecure, he knew his Andrews and Stoddard by heart, and used to amuse himself by giving elocutionary renditions of the sense of Demosthenes, or delicate scansions of the more melodious lines of Horace, while his less favored classmates were almost vanquished by the ordinary tasks of preparing a rugged translation, or adapting Bohn to the style of their own presumed vocabulary. College life was a little hard, at first, for the reason that Morland found among his hundred fellows of the same year a dozen who knew as much as he, and fifty who worked harder; while, to his amazement, there was one who had actually read more books. Gradually, however, he adjusted himself to a condition never wholly agreeable to one who has always been first in his set and vicinage; and, after passing through various grades of collegiate unpopularity because of

alleged reserve or egotism, was on the whole declared to be a good fellow and an unquestionably bright one. Skimming over mathematics; getting into the literature of Greek and Latin and the paradigms of French and German (plus an occasional lyric of Heine); perversely enjoying philosophy and political economy; nearly ruining his Commencement standing by his frank heresies in the natural religion classroom; personally liking some of the more reckless collegians, but despising dissipation as vulgar, Morland was first and last a reader. The great college library was to him a treasury of gold and gems; had his soul been as large as his mind it would also have seemed a shrine, a paradise. Not even the excessively uninspiring professor of literature could diminish his zeal for books, though the English classroom was to him the least attractive place in the college; and the old instructor never dreamed that the dark boy had read the *Ormulum* and the comedies of Congreve and — unlike himself — had mastered an Anglo-Saxon grammar he found on the dusty top shelf of the philological alcove.

So Morland's four years passed right pleasantly, and at Commencement his externally impassive father, his tearfully gratified mother, and his roseate sister heard him deliver a really

excellent dissertation on the influence of the Sasanian Dynasty,—the adjective having been unfamiliar to him when, six weeks earlier, the topic had been assigned by the discretion of the authorities.

What profession or pursuit should be followed by this new heir of the ages, this green scion of a hill-town ancestral tree? Morland's father was a lawyer, but the previous Morlands, with the exception of a single shoemaker, had been farmers for generations, solid deacons in the church of which Squire Morland himself was deemed an important pillar. That the squire's nature lacked flexibility, warmth, sympathy, was proof of its fitness for columnar service. In the maternal line of descent there had been more irregularity, but more visible ability, including that of several ministers, one of whom had been an eighteenth-century divine, wit, sermonizer, pamphleteer, and college trustee of large local repute, who, had he lived in later times, would have been a social novelist or an effective politician.

Granting, then, that the fledgling bachelor of arts had inherited hard rectitude from his father's line, intellectual ability from his mother's, and probably longevity from both, what was he to do? The ministry was out of the question; medicine had never entered his

mind; teaching would bring him too near to actual humanity; while business, since their jovial daughter's alleged matrimonial deflection, had been coldly received by both his parents. The law—who would care to sit in his father's fusty office for fifty years more, or duplicate it elsewhere and get a living by beating some other pettifogger or writing wills for valetudinarians who bestowed their earthly goods with the generosity of the fishhawk when he drops his marine spoils beneath the eagle's swoop? Why not literature, then? A man of books might surely make books, or at least a reader could edit periodicals for others to read. The more Morland thought of the scheme the better he liked it; nor, strange to say, was there any opposition at home. His mother always said yes whenever possible, and it was not hard to get the assent of his father, who had never ceased to pride himself on the invincible vigor and unanswerable satire of his own series of anti-abolitionist letters contributed to the "*Surrey County Democrat*" in the '40's; and had since felt an inward assurance that he could show these fellows how to run a paper, if he had a mind to.

So it was that Morland went to the New England metropolis and got a position on a daily newspaper at ten dollars a week, with

five dollars a column for space-work beyond a certain amount. A graduate of his college, on the editorial staff of the paper, who knew something of his capabilities and the quality of his penwork, gave him this brilliant opening, which he soon made available for proving his possession of a more varied industry than his classmates had ever supposed he possessed. Quartering himself in a third-story back bedroom up on "boarding-house hill," he subsisted in Washington-pie restaurants, kept his eyes open in his walks abroad, and turned out miscellaneous copy with a success that was approved by the city editor, and ultimately caught the eye of the managing editor himself. Morland felt that the best result of a college education is — or ought to be — facile adaptability to circumstances; and was quick to adjust himself to his new environment. He who, in his undergraduate days, had been thought to care more for a sixteenth-century play than for a nineteenth-century newspaper, smiled as he cut out and pasted daily in his rapidly growing but soon abandoned scrapbook such varia as an account of a new statue in the Public Garden, a "story" of a stroll among the once aristocratic mansions of the West End, a description of the funeral of a Salem street common-councilman, an inter-

view with an Irish nationalist, a satirical poem on the presidential aspirants of the other political party, and a review of a Russian pessimistic novel.

Morland was now as near happiness as he ever came; far from classmates for whom he cared little or from relatives or village neighbors to whom he felt it necessary to make explanations of his point of view, he now could follow his own bent, knowing next to nobody outside the office, and finding a new zest in intellectual creation, humble as it was. Perhaps this was better than his lifelong habit of mere book absorption. He had never, indeed, been really unhappy; all his aloofness from his quondam associates in northern New England had not blinded him to the fact that largeness of thought and freedom of intellectual stimulus, in that keen air, amply offset the limitations of rocky acres, four months of snow, and men and women with granite and ice in their hearts. He would not have exchanged, if he could, the storm, and stress, and query, and worry, and "riz-biscuits" and scrawny women of his birth-land for the placid and sometimes bovine content of richer states to the southward; yet he keenly enjoyed, when he came to know it, the way in which some city people, even on Massachusetts Bay,

accept things, without suffering any pangs of mental dyspepsia or spiritual introspection.

His first urban year told against his health. It is not easy for a country boy, though more athletic than Morland, to breakfast at noon, dine at night, take a bite at midnight, smoke irregularly, frequent basement beer-saloons, and endure what becomes to him the engrossing dissipation of work on a daily newspaper. The end of the world seems to come when the last form of a morning journal goes to the electrotyping room and the endless coil of paper begins to be fed to the presses for the early trains. Next morning, however, all must be begun anew; and to the tax of regular work is added the manifold charm of miscellaneous and not always ascetic wanderings under the gaslight. After six months Morland had a queer feeling — or, worst of all, a lack of feeling — in his head; a positive headache or a broken limb, or a clear case of diphtheria would have been actually welcome in comparison. When, for a fortnight, he had walked through the city as though in a dazy dream in which men's voices sounded strange or distant and his hold on his own personality seemed to be failing him, and he had gone at length to the basement office of a German West End doctor, he found difficulty in saying, in answer

to the medical man's questions, that anything was the matter with him. He slept, ate, walked, wrote, and reasoned as usual, but he could only aver that things seemed queer — a proposition which the Teutonic *Æsculapius*, who was an advanced "thinker" and ethical sociologist, readily admitted, while he administered jokes and prescribed plenty of fresh air, roast beef, stale bread, no beer or sweets, and a semi-daily dose of a diluted acid to be drunk through a glass tube. Slow recovery came, with occasional relapses, and Morland, at the end of his second year, though he had lost the slight touch of up-country red in his cheeks, and looked thirty years old, was duly acclimatized, with a clear sense of the silliness of his own visions — which had included death or dementia — and the superiority of the medical profession over the clerical in real utility to the world.

When his little salary and steadily increasing space-writing concerning all things, and a few other matters, had for some time brought him thirty-five or forty dollars a week, he was put, according to the thrifty custom of newspaper counting-rooms, on a regular weekly wage of twenty-five dollars for all work; which sum, when reported in the white and green houses of his native village, seemed permissive of in-

definite possibilities of expenditure: "Only two years out of college, too! Why, our pastor gets eight hundred a year, instead of thirteen; and hard enough it is to raise the minister-tax to pay him once a quarter."

In the city, with its more magnificent money standards, Morland found his new stipend, with some savings from the former wage, just sufficient to warrant a double room and somewhat more dainty dinners. In the newspaper office, as his special fitnesses became more manifest, his assignments to general work fell off, while those of book-reviews and miscellaneous editorials increased, until, with the exception of an occasional obituary of some man of letters, he was virtually nothing more than literary critic. His ten-year stock of English literature stood him in good stead, reinforced as it was by the journalist's sixth sense of quickly turning to the right pigeon-hole of his brain for the desired fact or apt allusion. It happened that the managing editor, who declared that he hadn't read a book for thirteen years, was specially pleased, in any article, with twenty mentions of collateral or remote names, while, on his own side, Morland's knack of multifarious literary allusion was almost a fault; hence his comparatively rapid advancement to a chair usually denominated soft.

Mystery hangs, for the public eye, over the newspaper office in general, and especially, perhaps, over the desk of the book-reviewer. In his non-professional walks Morland had to answer many an italicised question. "Do you really *read* all the books you review?" "How *do* you find time?" "Are n't you *afraid* the author will be very angry if you say such unkind things of him?" "What a great library you must have?" "How *perfectly* lovely it must be to have nothing to do but to read all day long, and get paid for it!" Meanwhile poor Morland reduced his gentle art to a system, and revised my lord of Verulam's dictum until, in the midnight gaslight of the top stories that overhung the narrow thoroughfare, it read somewhat as follows: "Some books are reprints from periodicals; others are worthless on page 28, preposterous in chapter IX., or wave asses' ears in the preface; still others are manufactured alphabetically; then, of course, there are novels; and once in a year or two may come something really worth while. Say of the first what you already know; put to the second the knack of the tea-taster; test the third by their weakest spots; get the gist of the fourth, if you can; and thank Apollo for the fifth." Meanwhile, if his old stock of classic literature got farther

and farther away, and less and less often did he read a book through, seldom did he make a conspicuous mistake in his estimates, or fail to produce swift reviews that served the public better than those laboriously contributed by professorial specialists, — which, he noted, were usually four weeks late, too long or too short, and chiefly devoted to the magnifying of some little point that had delighted or disgusted the learned reviewer, with whom he was usually obliged to carry on a voluminous correspondence, largely devoted to explanations why proof had not been sent, as requested, a week before publication.

So the years went on; Morland's reviews and editorials and obituaries somewhat gained in facility of epigram, and correspondingly lost in enthusiasm of expression. Censure and commendation from his pen became more indirect, and his readers, if they admired the cleverness of the verbal product, were not always certain as to the real drift of the writing. Indeed, a sort of haze of insincerity sometimes seemed to hang between the newspaper he served and the eyes of its readers, a circumstance due perhaps to the fact that it was so often read by club-gentlemen over cigarettes and coffee.

Indeed, Morland found the environment of

his profession, from which he neither saw nor desired escape in life, steadily conducive to the development of a spirit of negation. His function was to criticise, not create; to denounce, or at best to describe, and certainly not to do. If his denials were languid, they were increasingly artistic, and his very visible cynicism was contemplative rather than violent. Excessive vituperation was indubitably as vulgar as hearty and creative optimism was risky; he would none of either. He who builds may err, and he who destroys may regret; but it is always safe to make mild suggestions that things might well be different. Even one of God's sunsets may seem inartistically arranged. Who has not noted the unnaturalness of nature, with its dauby green landscapes and eye-smiting collocations of color? If, on an evening when somebody had seen the radiant orb go down in regal glory of orange and purple, he had asked Morland whether it were not the most beautiful day-ending he had ever beheld, he would have replied, in circumflex, "perhaps;" which, in his vocabulary, had become the substitute for "yes," as "hardly" had taken the place of "no." Possibly that was one of the reasons why readers called his newspaper "The Laodicean."

But Morland was no specialist in sunsets, despite all his youthful visions of the great range to the westward of his boyhood home. Once in a while he could not fail to notice, through the southwestern streets of the Back Bay, the saffron that overhung the spires; while Corey Hill and West Roxbury were altogether more agreeable for his Sunday walks in May and October than in August, just before his two weeks' vacation, — earned at both ends. But the lilt of the meadow-lark was not for him, save as it refreshed an unconscious ear after a hard and hot night at the office. His life, for the most part, was the negatively innocent one of the flaneur; absolute vice was so coarsely commonplace as to be unendurable to a nature that was becoming — or thought it was becoming — more refined with every year; but the song-bird's chorus, the sky's banners, the garden's glory, the ocean's lure were in vain, for which circumstance he was not unduly to be blamed; for to most eyes seeing is not vision. Morland himself had once averred, with a chuckle, that a botanist sees no flowers, a geologist no landscape, a biologist no life.

But he had his better moods, or rather mood. That evolution is progress is proved by the decadents and degenerates who lag by

the way, stroll into by-paths, or turn and go backward ; and Morland thought he was proving it when he made up his mind to give his brain a chance ; though his soul might be stunted, he had determined that his mind should do something more than grind out book-reviews of which not one reader in ten thousand knew the authorship, and which were dead and inaccessible in a month. It was his fancy even that his mental courage had increased because of his sacrifice of spiritual sense,—the half is more than the whole. Against religion, for that matter, he had nothing to say ; it was indubitably, like the police force, a necessity for the lower classes, and, like a cup of tea, a boon to old ladies. At one time, indeed, he debated during an entire table d'hôte dinner whether, by a final act of rationalism, to enter the Roman Church and eliminate even the slight interruption given him by his nearly dormant ethical sense ; but by the time he lit his cigar he found it difficult to reconcile his vision of the most august institution of the ages with actual paper flowers, bad art, and imperfect ventilation. On the other hand, the thin and impersonal aspirations toward ethical improvement—addressed to nobody in particular—which took the place of prayers in the weekly gathering of a body

of "advanced thinkers," ceased to interest him after a Sunday or two. If that was all, why take the trouble to go and sit for an hour in a dance-hall, and then, while going down the stairs, have to listen to the reverential adoration bestowed upon the lecturer by various half educated acquaintances who refused to worship anything else, with the possible exception of their own brains and Mr. Darwin's.

Out of this sort of life, then, came a misty but gradually consolidating idea that he would write a book, books perhaps, or at any rate essays, — since his newspaper habit of finishing everything at a sitting had become almost a second nature. In this idea he was as far from the thought of money as he was from that of benefiting anybody. Even the fame he had in mind was simply that of one who could clearly set forth something that the un-superstitious would read and know he wrote; the anonymous irked him. So does the eastern American think, with pen in hand, sermons in the seventeenth century, Federalists in the eighteenth, and what-not in the nineteenth. If Morland, like old Thomas Welby, had ever framed a title, it would have been no *Philosophy of Life*, — delicate and dispassionate negation need not fuss about philosophies. Once he reflected concerning the idea

of a collection of essays to be called "The Disproof of the Provable," until he happened to think that it might be used against Herbert Spencer as well as against the Reverend John Angell James. Was he a propagandist of anything? No; there was not much use if you were a Schopenhauer in taking the trouble to say so in hundreds of printed pages. His heartiest laugh for many a day came when he saw on a bill-board a theatrical poster in which a shock-headed and broken-toothed farm-boy was enunciating and answering the query, "What's the good of anythin'? Nothin'."

But the evolved mood in its last estate—the proof that his own personality had reached a point somewhat above that of the primitive cave-dweller, with sharpened flint-stone in hairy hand, fighting wild beasts for scanty food—led to his ultimate decision to quit his editorial place, write book-reviews when he chose, multiply the neatly-turned essays he was already contributing to one English monthly review and two or three American magazines, and let his mind grow for mind's sake merely. Was not this heroic altruism?

So it came to pass that he bought an interest in a home-and-literary weekly of good local repute, published for long in Harborside, and well known to him from his boyhood days,

when the post-office boxes had been plentifully sprinkled with its issues every Friday afternoon. Morland, strange to say, now had eight or ten thousand dollars ahead, partly saved from his salary and partly made by modest flyers in the "street;" he having had sufficient sense to pull in his kites before the strings broke. The easy editorship of his new paper came to him as of right; his old one was glad to retain his services as caustic reviewer of as many books as he cared to have sent him; and the strain of an intenser journalism being removed, he filed and refined his published or unpublished social and semi-scientific essays to his heart's content. Harborside was a pleasant place, the most metropolitan small city he knew, with a library and a bookstore and a club and a coterie—not very large, of course—of people of sufficient intelligence to know when to talk, and sufficient culture to know when to be silent; so, since its atmosphere was unquestionably saline and did not suggest his now disliked up-country New England in the least, Morland got along very well, and was deemed, by those whose aims were neither financial nor political, almost the lion of the town.

He had lived there nearly ten years when he met Amoret, and determined, after a day's

casual reflection, that she was the only woman who had ever interested him. "A pretty high compliment?" queried he, as he laid down his curling-iron. "It is barely possible that she will deserve it."

VII.

A SUMMER STORM.

MORLAND found no such difficulty as the gentle Amoret had anticipated in discovering the fact that Miss Tetley and her new assistant had quartered themselves in their seaside cottage; nor was the location of that modest domicile difficult of ascertainment. Perhaps three days intervened between his call at the deserted house in town and his appearance at the door of the summer house-let three miles away. The call was nominally made in friendly fashion upon Miss Tetley, for whom, in point of fact, Morland had always felt a mild liking. She was intelligent, she was not commonplace; she had a tactful way of suggesting satirical opinions without actually expressing them, and as a conversationalist, she had the custom, none too common, of talking half the time and listening half; for neither she nor Morland believed that the art of talk consisted of a lecture-monologue on one side and a beaming or bored silence

on the other. So they got along very well together, and Morland mildly enjoyed a quarterly chat in her frigid parlor. Nothing was easier, accordingly, than to seem to make Amoret a pleasant afterthought in his walk out the Cape in search of the house of his old friend; and, strangely enough, both the ladies believed that his appearance was a sort of accident — Miss Lodema because she never had connected the thought of sentiment, or even of ordinary “attentions” to young women, with the cool, self-centred, and now sufficiently mature personality of Harborside’s chief man-of-letters; Amoret because her entirely unaffected modesty assumed that she was but a minor part of her cousin’s eminently respectable and long-known establishment.

They were sitting on the shaded porch when Morland came to the gateway, hat in hand and black hair blowing lightly away from his white forehead.

“Ah! I’ve found you! What a pleasant summer shrine!” said he.

Amoret rose with a happy look, but Miss Tetley remained seated; she was embroidering a table-scarf in a complexity of flossy silks, and said, in the unruffled contralto that is developed by long years of dealing with the gushing gayety or stolid intractability of

schoolgirls, "This is a welcome sight, Mr. Morland; take a seat, and stay to tea as a penalty for never coming here before."

"With pleasure," said the critic, "since that allows me to come again and make my 'party-call;'" and he sat down at the foot of the elder lady, where he could conveniently look into the face of Amoret, who noticed, as he held his soft hat in his hand, the green tint in both hat and eyes, and the delicacy of his shapely long fingers. As for his motions, they seemed so reticently graceful and yet unartificial that Amoret rather envied them, and began to feel a wholly new sense of awkwardness. Rodney had not often been in her mind of late; but since meeting Morland, she could hardly avoid recurrent thoughts of her childhood friend, in the persistency of contrast. Rodney was like—or had been like—a bounding, happy dog; Morland's movements were those of a cat shod in aristocracy, clad in ermine, soft in action, and reposeful in quiet. The feline comparison did not suggest cool trickery to Amoret's mind, but rather a remark she had read in some essay, to the effect that cats should be the companions of brain-toilers, because of their self-respectful delicacy of demeanor. Somehow, at any rate, Amoret felt for the first time in her life

in the presence of a person clearly and hopelessly superior to herself, whose thoughts and words were well worth following, and in whose esteem she fain would stand, because he represented an ideal, unfleshly and high, no incarnation of which had previously crossed her path.

"These seaside days of yours must be very happy," said Morland, looking at both ladies, but letting his eyes rest upon Amoret's. "How do you best like to spend them, Miss Wenton?" said he.

Amoret bent forward and picked one huge daisy of a preposterously long and twiggy stem, her supple movement being as pretty in Morland's eyes as it was clumsy in her own. Secretly delighted to see Morland again, she felt desirous of doing something to gain a minute's time that she might seem to be more at ease than she really was, for she was troubled by her new annoyance at the limitations of her self-education as compared with the richly-stored mind of this veritable editor and author, concerning whom she had easily elicited plenty of information since their first meeting. Morland, on his part, was wondering whether his new interest in this slip of a girl was due to the fact that she seemed a living heroine of the Elizabethan lyric period,

or to her ill-concealed awareness of his presence. Physical beauty and flattering deference in woman are about equally attractive to the masculine mind, and when the cords of the two are wound together, and pull in the same direction, they stir even so self-centred an individual as Henry Morland.

“Oh, in looking at the sea and reading an occasional book,” said Amoret, rather weakly, in her own opinion.

“You agree with our cosmic American, then, that it is good to ‘loaf and invite your soul,’ ” said Morland.

“My soul gets plenty of invitations and returns few acceptances,” replied Amoret, with a ringing little laugh that Morland heard for the first time, and that also seemed to carry away with it, to Amoret’s delight, her own silly embarrassment.

“Your notion of rest, Mr. Morland,” said Miss Tetley, “would be better expressed by Whitman’s great opposite: ‘Toil unsevered from tranquillity.’ How did you happen to allow yourself the leisure of this afternoon walk?”

“Because I could n’t drive from my mind the thought of this poetic creature,” said Fact in Morland’s mind. “Because my work was done two days ahead, and I wanted to ask

you again about that quotation from Hawthorne — I 've been hunting it for a week," said Fiction, as it looked Miss Tetley ingenuously in the eye.

"That passage about growing old?" said she. "I found it for you the very next day, and wrote it out. Amoret, dear, won't you get a little slip that lies in my desk? Open the top and you 'll find it in the right-hand pigeon-hole." As Amoret went through the door the wind fluttered the long ribbons that hung from her belt, and Morland wondered where she found their nondescript tint of Italian yellow.

"Here it is," said Miss Tetley, on her return, and read:—

This bemoaning of one's self over the first careless, shallow gayety of youth departed, and this profound happiness over youth regained,—so much deeper and richer than that we lost,—are essential to the soul's development.

"That 's good gospel for a woman of fifty-five!"

"Or for a man of thirty-eight," said Morland, with equal candor. "Time, while it lasts, is nothing but a procession of dots, to be used seriatim; we must throw away the

old before we get the new, and the new is as fresh for you or me as for Miss Wenton."

"And as old for me as for Methuselah," added Amoret. "I wonder if Methuselah is alive somewhere this minute? What fun it will be when we die! I don't care anything about eternal rest, but I would like to hear Chaucer talk, tell Sir Thomas Browne about the new crematories, and ask Bach how fast his fugues ought to be played."

"Life must be youth," said Morland; "when it ceases to be so it becomes death."

"And any minute is the tip of the stalk, the sum of all the good that has gone before — just like the sticky bud on top of the little horse-chestnut tree I used to watch behind grandpa's shop," said Amoret; and there flashed into her mind the thought that Rodney and she had once had some such talk as this very one.

"Death itself is nothing but another minute in our career, as though we were just stepping on a railroad train," said Miss Tetley, who made up for her unorthodoxy in some things by a dogmatic conservatism in others.

"Unless it may be the rotting of the last living particle of Miss Wenton's horse-chestnut," said Morland.

"But the tree leaves behind it other chestnuts to plant," said Amoret.

"My great-grandfather is not alive because I am," said he.

"But his memory is," said Amoret. "If so frail a thing as a mere recollection can survive, must n't a thing a thousand fold more important be in existence still?"

"On that argument you could prove that the bit of stone you threw into the ocean week before last has a soul, because you remember its corner scratched your hand when you threw it," said Morland.

"You see, Amoret dear, what a dreadful heretic Mr. Morland is," said Miss Tetley with a smile. "I really must n't let you stay together too long. But he likes to shock people."

"Well," said Amoret, eagerly, "living is everlasting youth, and I'm sure I shall be happier and wiser ten thousand years ahead than I am to-day. This world would be a dead failure were it not for two things, God and immortality."

"A *dead* failure," said Morland, in a low voice; and Amoret wondered what he meant, meanwhile guessing that he had some inner sorrow, and determining to prove to him, sometime and somehow, that the theme of all life

is the growth of the human soul, the development of character, the setting forth of the universality of the upward tendency of the world. Morland had heard such sermons before.

Lighter and brighter talk followed, and at tea-time the trio became as jestful as though there were never a problem in the world. Morland never got excited over anything, nor did his coolness desert him now; but his wonder grew that a girl could be so pretty and yet know so much. His city experiences had confirmed him in an early impression that feminine beauty was, as a matter of fact, disassociated from anything save a modicum of mentality, and that sagacity was most frequently accompanied in this world by raw-boned faces and large feet; but here was a compact disproof of his theory. Oddly enough, Amoret seemed to be virgin soil. Why had n't she had any "experiences" before this? Anybody might fall in love with her, though Morland had as yet hardly framed such a boyish plan for himself. If she was a flirt, she was at least an actress whose ways were worth studying, and he would study them. Morland was no Dante, and the faintly defined new life which began for him when first he saw this modern Beatrice, meant — if it meant

anything at all — that he would study her for a little, and let come what would. Love, in his ultimate view, was simply possession of a woman for what she was worth to him; any trifling element of self-sacrifice for Amoret or anybody else would have seemed somewhat juvenile or novelistic. Meanwhile the possible loss due to her intrusion upon his time was more than made up by a new opportunity for critical observation of Woman. If his volume of "Studies in Social Evolution," already half written, was to be good for anything it must include more than one type, and here surely was a comparatively unfamiliar one.

Amoret's Morland, however, was another man. To her he seemed gentle, thoughtful, cultured, serious, with a pathetic little undertone of sadness beneath his pleasant smile, and a sort of attractiveness in his tentative pessimism, which, she was sure, was but the scar of some brave inward battle he had fought all alone. For him the shapes of life must have seemed empty and giftless, harmless for evil but feeble for good to one who was wandering like a pilgrim knight through a forlorn world. Had not his existence so far been a succession of preludes to some nobler song? If she could but help him to one strain of sweeter sound, though she never met him

again, she would be glad. Did he know the sense of "God is love,"—a love greater than faith or hope, a love bearing through the ages the inner idea of the Venus of Milo? If not, might she not be a humble priestess to him, or to any soul that needed help?

It was eleven o'clock when such thoughts as these ran through the mind of the white-clad Amoret, ready for bed. She had put out her kerosene lamp and stood by the eastern window, looking at the slightly dilapidated moon as it rose clear from the tremulous water. A chipping sparrow, somewhere in the night, gave one abbreviated trill and was silent. "Oh," thought Amoret, "there is so much to do in the world, so much; but I know I can do a little," and she went to bed. The shadow of the sash crept across the counterpane as the light increased; the slow clock of the distant city hall struck twelve, one, two, and then Amoret stood in a little garden, alone with Morland. On one side was a city peopled with statues, on the other was a wood of oak trees swarming with mosquitoes. Then the statues waved their hands and the mosquitoes buzzed, while Morland said, "Choose between the saints and the sinners;" and Amoret tried to run away, but her legs refused their work, and she could n't find her French

grammar. Just then she awoke, and discovered that she had left the window-screen open. It was seventeen minutes past eight.

Amoret's forthcoming days were not selfish, nor did she become moon-struck in her new scheme of helpfulness. There was enough to do: to help Miss Tetley get a good rest; to keep the house in order; to meet the perfumed and amiable subjects of her instruction every other morning, and on the alternate days, at just eleven o'clock, to take an ocean bath that was theoretically joyous and invigorating but practically boreal; to write a daily letter to grandfather; and to read a daily stint of a chapter in a big book on sociology, and two chapters in one of George Meredith's novels, — this was enough. Vacation is the busiest time of the year, and rest the most absorbing of avocations, especially if there is an inexplicable amount of mending to be done. Between Morland's visits — which, though not intrusively numerous, were not exactly infrequent — Amoret therefore found her time as fully employed as did the recipient of her intended spiritual counsels, in his reading of manuscripts and proof, dictating of correspondence, and writing of editorials and book-reviews. His essay revision somehow fell into abeyance. "Grind out your day,"

thought the editor ; "I've a mind to walk out to the Cape to-morrow, for exercise." "Make each minute a joy, for it's the good God's gift," wrote Amoret in red ink, and pinned the sentiment over her stained-pine desk.

One morning, a whole month after these first meetings between Morland and Amoret, Mr. Welby happened to go to the post-office a little earlier than usual. His life, since Amoret's absence, had gone forward in its monotonous but not unhappy way. Trade was as it was, — less and less as compared with the business of years ago, but not so meagre as to mean instant need or ultimate departure to the staring white poorhouse beyond Hunger Hill. The vulgarity over the way still sold his flash weeklies by the dozen, and got the trade of the boys about town, the servant-girls, the new middle-class working-people, and, in general, the race that knew not Joseph. Mr. Welby's experience was no worse than that of others ; for instance, Hendrickson the grocer, whose wooden shutters and weather-beaten sign availed little against the showy front and big paned windows of the new "Boston store," the proprietor of which dyed his moustache and parted his hair in a horizontal line up the middle of the back of

his head. Communities are ungrateful to their old servants in trade, and care little for the good old times in comparison with the glitter of gaudy to-day; besides, in the period of Mr. Welby's elder years, antiquity had not come into new fashion, and was out of old vogue. Inns were hotels; shops were stores; tall clocks were sent to the barn-loft; bed-warmers were remanded to the garret or the junk-shop; the bonnets and checked waistcoats of 1830 were laughed at instead of being restored to fashion-plates; and such a thing as a silver buckle or a painted miniature was deemed a relic of the days of Napoleon. If Mr. Welby had been living a quarter of a century earlier or later, or if he had been "worth" twenty thousand dollars, he would have been deemed an eccentric but very able and estimable man; as it was, all but a few faithful friends passed him by. The courtly remnant of the ancient town, to be sure, withdrew more and more into its shell, and talked with gentle sadness of the good time lost, agreeing that its relics were getting fewer and fewer; but this remnant, unfortunately, was largely composed of those too poor to promote the circulation of money in the community, or too stingy to be generous. In New England economy becomes inveterate

even when unnecessary. Furthermore, the old circle had never dreamed of any obligation to aid, directly or indirectly, those who, as scions of well-known families, had always been regarded as leaders of local affairs. Their struggle might be bitter, but it must be concealed, most of all, from those who knew it best; and self-deception, even, was the apparent rule.

But Mr. Welby, in his capacity of local philosopher, deemed that he had a keener sense of the facts of things than most of his contemporaries. "From him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath," said he to the grocer, sonorously, when once they met on the corner and fell into a chat about the "improvements" that stared here and there from the familiar walls. "Plenty of horse sense in the Bible," soliloquized the philosopher on his lonely way homeward. "My 'Philosophy of Life' seldom comes up to it, and perhaps never surpasses it." And so he walked up the old staircase, took down his Paragraph Bible, put on his octagonal gold spectacles, lit his solar lamp, and laid the book down only to turn, for comparison's sake, to his own manuscript bible of philosophic experience, in which the last entries were:—

As for the much and the little in the universe, each is explanatory of the other.

Make your character your book ; live love.

(and he wondered whether anybody would mistake "live" for an adjective, but determined to let the word stand for the present.)

Some men are derelicts on the sea of life.

Do not test the universe by your house-thermometer.

Then he added, after his Bible reading :—

Christ had the wit to see that wedlock is earthly, friendship heavenly ; there ought to be a state called lovelock.

Old Testament and New hint strongly toward a falling away from a possible gift of immortal life.

The anthropomorphism of the Hebrew and the Christian religious books was as necessary as temporary.

And he closed the two dear volumes, the printed and the written ; put the one on the shelf, locked the other in its desk, went to bed late, therefore rose early, breakfasted on a bit of broiled ham, and went to the post-office to see if his letter from Amoret had come in the midnight mail.

The Bellwood post-office occupied the

ground floor of an old two-story granite building; the call-boxes were opposite the front door, while on the little corridor leading back to the distribution-room were a dozen lock-boxes of large size, the generous wooden flap-doors of which opened downward. The possession of one of these boxes, the rental of which was no less than two dollars a year, was supposed by the small boys of the village to give a peculiar air of aristocracy to the proprietors. While the ignoble crowd was humbly waiting for the general delivery, watching whether anything was put into this or that number, hopeful as the postmaster, with his bundle of letters, approached the desired region, and hopeless when the box-surrounded door was opened; some one of the few lock-box magnates would step quietly to the dark passage-way, leisurely pull his bunch of keys from his trousers pocket, open the wooden flap, let it hang downward, keys and all, extract his Whig or Democratic Boston daily, or weekly paper from distant New York, glance at his half-dozen letters, close the box, and walk out with the sober air of one on confidential terms with the inner administration of this world's affairs.

Mr. Welby had succeeded, by inheritance, to the old box of the dwindled publishing and

printing house; and had no more thought of giving it up than of abandoning the bookshop itself. Box B stood in his mind as the door of the outer world; and though its former daily contents had shrunk so that two or three stray epistles and an occasional circular were all that usually came, before Amoret left home, it would have seemed worse than a sin — an impropriety — to surrender the box for economy's sake, and let some new tenant pilfer, as it were, its enclosures day by day.

That morning the bookseller walked southward in the damp coolness of the river street before the sun was high. The freshness of perennial youth was in the gift of the new day; and a smile played around his thin lips as Squire Bennett's weather-beaten, one-seat gig stopped by the post-office door. The Bellwood children said that the squire's carriage had but one seat, so that he need n't ever be delayed, when he was going to court, by having to ask country trudgers to ride with him, and so wear out the wagon-springs.

"No chance for you to-day, squire," said the bookseller; "the weather's too pleasant for anybody to want to go to law."

"Ah, my friend," said the squire, "just the sort of sun to be a weather-breeder; one never

knows what 's going to happen in this world, or when the storm 's to come."

The contents of box B, that morning, were a circular from a printing-ink manufacturer and a fat letter from Harborside, — evidently the longest epistle Amoret had yet sent, unless it should prove to contain wild roses, newspaper cuttings, or other things the girl so often inclosed as of possible interest to their recipient. Possible? The old man's brain had but two thoughts nowadays — Amoret and the "Philosophy of Life." Of the two, he imagined that he cared more for the second, because its writing was his mature business as a man, while Amoret was but a child whom he was lovingly bringing up in the intervals of adult toil and grandfatherly reflection. Of late the book had come to have its chief value in his mind as a sort of legacy, a possible mentor for Amoret when he should be gone. Since, then, whatever concerned Amoret or the note-book was of paramount importance, he took his podgy envelope with a happy heart, walked back to the shop, unlocked the heavy wooden door with the brass key, long since worn shiny, sat down in a chair near the breeze, took his glasses from their leather case, and with thoughts of deliberate joy, began to read:—

LONG CAPE, 2 August, highnoon.

TO THE DEAR GRANDFATHER, *Greeting:—*

Oh dear ! I've so many things to say that I don't know where to begin. I really don't know but I would save time by going up on the train to tell it all instead of scribbling it. Why can't we simply turn on a current of apprehension, to run through the air from mind to mind, so that the one will understand just what the other wishes, without these poor slow ways to which enfleshed mortals are bound? A gives B a rose to smell ; B hands C an apple to taste ; C kicks D ; D kisses E ; E pats F ; F's eyes flash hate at G ; G carves a statue whose stony instant suggests a past and a future ; H tells his story in the pigments of a picture, while J utters his soul to the world in a symphony, the meaning of which would be perfectly plain if you only knew whether the composer had in mind a moonlit lake, a summer noon, or a placid nun who frets not in her convent's narrow room. Meanwhile those of us who chatter or scrawl in words do somewhat more, but after all, I can't really get at you or you understand the inner me. By and by telepathy will do the business, and when we are disembodied, we shall use least what now is most important, and just flash ideas into each other. Don't you think there's a little truth in clairvoyance, second sight, apparitions of the dying, and all our queer sensations about hearing the flutter of angels' wings, speaking of the devil and having him appear, thinking we've been in places before, knowing what somebody is going to say,

and all that? Of course it's fifty per cent humbug and forty-five coincidence, but what we shall know sometime is the five per cent.

Well, I'm not getting on at all with my letter. I think I'll tell you the worst and the best last. My teaching the uninstructable ladies every other day is n't the worst by any means. They don't know much and they never will; but they know more than they did when I began to sell them my brains, and more than they will when, six months hence, they've forgotten all they are paying for now. One of them wanted to know the other day if Tennyson was n't a great atheistic lecturer. Come to find out, she meant the Concord sage. That must have been because she had for dessert at the hotel, where we dined the day before, two pieces of blueberry pie, brandy-whips, orange sherbet, peaches, and water-melon,—enough to make one think Spenser wrote the Rowley poems. But the three others know more, and all four are just as pleasant as need be. I believe it's all nonsense, this talk about the trials of teachers. In my experience so far, I've hardly had any trouble at all,—any more, that is to say, than everybody must have in this world of drudgery, unless she has an independent fortune; and then, she merely swaps drudgery for tedium. And do you know, granddaddy, I really *like* to teach,—that is, theoretically I do. Did you ever see that device of a big torch in a big hand, with a lot of little torches in little hands held up to it to catch some of the flame? Well, the big torch is you or me selling

books, writing philosophy, teaching girls, or telling New York women the difference between Sebastian Bach and Offenbach.

Cousin Lodema is just as good as she can be, but I don't think she is a bit well. The more she rests the weaker she seems to get. I do hope that this month of August will begin to build her up.

What are you reading lately? I suppose you will laugh when I say that I have begun *Sir Charles* for the second time. You see I picked up the fourth volume at random, and before I knew it I had read so much that I thought I might as well go back to the start.

We don't see many friends out here, but Mr. Morland comes two or three times a week just to chat with cousin Lodema and me. You know I mentioned a Mr. Morland in a letter a week or two ago — a literary man and editor in Harborside. He certainly is an interesting personage, and one I think you would like to know; for *real* literary men, with their minds above the mud of this world, are not so very common. Let me describe him: Age thirty-eight (I know exactly, for he told us the other day); height about five feet ten-and-a-half inches, I should say; complexion tinted marble; hair black, and a good deal of it; hands and feet small; voice low, but firm; eyes — I am sure I can't tell; one doesn't want to stare at him too much, and all I have been able to make out is a sort of chameleon-like dark brownish green. He is very gentle and thoughtful, and says such unusual things that you

can't help thinking about them long afterward. I am sure he has had some great sorrow, or some deep sense of the problem of life and the woefulness of the world ; for though he is as gentle as a knight-errant, and I am sure would be as brave if there were need, he does n't seem to feel sure that there is any God or immortality, or that things in this world of ours don't merely drift, without any such thing as real right or wrong. "There is no such thing as abstract truth," he said the other day. But I do believe that this is all a pretence, — I mean a self-deception, — for I know that nobody who has such thoughts as his can fail to be a sort of poet ; and a poet is a priest, and a priest preaches goodness. I would n't say so much about him, save that he seems — I 'm sure I can't tell why — to rely on poor foolish me. Once he said that nobody had ever helped him, or ever would, unless I did. And he knows all English and American, and half all German, literature by heart ; and has written for ever so many reviews and magazines, and knows fifty times as much as I do ! What he meant when he said, another time, that I helped him as a flower helped Pan, was, I suppose, that any little thing might teach something to a wise big one. He does n't drink wine, I am sure, or smoke much, I know, and does n't care for clubs or friends. Indeed, he seems so all alone that I 'm glad if I can pass the time of day with him just for one short summer. He declares society a sham, and social institutions mere shells, so I don't believe he ever means to marry.

I must say I think there's a good deal of truth in what he says ; but I wish he could get a little more sunshine into his great big brain. I *will make* him yet, before I get through with him.

Now, my own dearest good grandfather Thomas Welby, don't be frightened, but just hop out of your armchair and say hurrah ! I nearly got drowned the other day, and Mr. Morland saved my life. Read this through just as fast as ever you can, and forget all about it, except to thank him in your heart. We'd been planning a little sailing expedition for ever so long, — that is, cousin Lodema and Mr. Morland had ; and at length we took a little sloop yacht, with a captain who knows every sunken rock and barren tree on shore between here and the sunrise end of the United States, and started out. The party was a funny one : we three and an old Canadian Episcopal minister and his wife and son, a college boy, who have taken the next cottage for the summer. Mr. Morland said he thought it would be better fun — I think that's the first time I ever heard him use the word *fun* — not to fill up with giggling schoolgirls and yachting-cap youth, and I thought so too.

Well, we started bright and early — half-past five in the morning — for our sail northeastward up the coast. The wind was fair, though not strong, and the captain thought we could easily go up to the head of a little narrow bay or fjord (you see I have n't read Norwegian novels for nothing), get dinner, and come home, with tide favoring us, in the afternoon.

Over and up we went in pretty fashion ; we seemed to skim along as though there were a stock of motion in the sails themselves ; it was evener than flying could be, and more varied than travelling on a smooth railroad track ; the waves danced and the seagulls swooped, and over it all was the delicious fragrance of a comparatively still summer ocean, and a warm glow in the air that would have burned you without the breeze, but, as it was, merely made you content. We talked about everything, from fish breakfasts to the inscrutables and the mysteries ; and, do you know, without giving away the secret of your book, I told them how wise you were and what thoughts you had. Mr. Morland said they must give you a great deal of satisfaction, which I think he meant as a compliment, for he never condescends to flatter. Don't you respect anybody more who seems thoughtfully sincere in all he says, especially when he looks at you as though he were passing through the door of your eyes to the shrine of your soul ?

The wind didn't prove very faithful, but at length we got to the little village of Higgins' Cove — just think of such a name for a picturesquely situated hamlet under the shadow of a great hill, beside sweet salt-hay meadows, and looking down the long ten-mile stretch of lovely sea and diminishing shore ! Then we "partook of a frugal repast," as the old novels used to say, to wit : fish chowder, cold sliced corned beef, and blueberry pie, in a funny little hotel. In the "parlor," or "drawing-room," as Mrs. Minis-

ter called it, were hung the marriage certificate of the tavern-keeper and his wife, with inserted photographs of himself, herself, and the person who "solemnized" the ceremony; somehow the record was not a bit solemn. But over on the opposite wall was another framed monstrosity, and that was a pitiful one,—nothing less than the *coffin-plate*—would you believe it?—of two little children they had, who died of diphtheria on the same day three years afterward.

Then Mr. Morland and the Episcopal minister had their cigars, prudently imported,—why is it that Episcopalians all smoke, while an Orthodox or Baptist preacher with a pipe in his mouth would be a sort of curiosity?—and we started back. The wind was weak for the first mile, weaker the second, weakest the third, and a figment of fancy the fourth. We took our bearings by things on the shore, and finally could hardly see that we were moving at all; we were just teetering on the glassy water, and the glare grew so hot and heady that cousin Lodema had to go below into the little cabin, which was hotter yet, and put a wet cloth on her head. The rest of us stayed on deck, and had enough to do to keep the mirrored, wavering sun-reflection out of our eyes.

Here and there in the west were one or two little clouds, but no prospect of any more wind for an indefinite time. There was a strange feeling in the air, as though of some impending calamity; our voices sounded hollow and artificial, and seemed to echo back on us; and we wished we were somewhere else, or had a chance to *do* something instead

of sitting and waiting. Don't you know the sensation one has just before a summer thunder storm at the end of a hot day? It isn't fear that we shall be struck by lightning or washed away by a cloud-burst; it's just being "perplexed and low," like Will the Warrener's mother in the old song — if only we could draw a full breath, or see a little more clearly, or move about with some life in our legs. Well, it was just so in the boat; I never understood before how the Ancient Mariner must have felt under similar circumstances. On land you can at least do something or go somewhere — light the lamp or make believe you have an errand down cellar; but on the water there is nothing, unless, as the men of the party suggested, you get out and row. They made some empty jokes, and I tried to be cheerful for poor cousin Lodema's sake, she seemed so pale in the hot and musty cabin; but we were all waiting and waiting, that was all. If we could only float down beyond the black spar buoy on Dead Man's Ledge, as far as Thread-of-Life channel, off Hurricane Island, two miles below — what a set of names! — the skipper thought there'd be a bit of a breeze; but as it was the sails simply hung in limp perpendicularity.

Then there was a ripple in the water, five hundred feet away, and the ripple spread into a broad dark sheet that seemed as unlike the mirroring glitter beside us as though it had been the land itself; the sail gave a shivery beat, two or three times, against the mast, as if it were vexed, or were being roused

from sleep ; the little hollow tube-like pennon at the masthead wiggled like a cat's tail in meditative ill-nature ; and the minister said : " There 's a little breeze ; that 's good ." But before you knew it the ripples became waves and the waves whitecaps ; the glassy sheet of water was all covered by the black blanket beyond ; the sail suddenly swept around to the other side of the sloop, giving the minister's son just time to dodge it, and when his mother said : " Look at that !" we saw for the first time a great mass of dark, dirty-gray cloud, like smoke from a bituminous coal furnace, sweeping towards us from the southwest. All this took less time, I really believe, than it takes me to write it ; but as soon as the cloud came in sight and the sail veered the captain jumped around as though things were important, though he didn't say anything ; told the minister's son to do something or other with the rudder, and tried himself to be in two places at once, as he loosened the ropes to lower the sails. The jib was fluttering free and the mainsail was half down when I felt a splash of water in my face and saw that the brown-black cloud was directly on us and was literally scooping the waves before it as it came. The next thing I knew the sloop gave a great lurch forward, then pitched into a hole in the water and went almost over on her leeward side. " Get up on the cabin, quick !" shouted the captain, as he grabbed the loose sail and pulled it down by main strength ; poor cousin Lodema gave a little scream from inside ; and I —— everything comes back to the I

in this selfish world — lurched backward, and before I knew it, felt a great ringing in my ears and strangulation in my throat and icy helplessness everywhere: I was in the water over my head, for the first time since I tumbled from the shed back of old Bill Jones's house, one spring freshet when I was a little girl. Well, to tell the truth, I did n't know anything for half a minute, save one universal discomfort, though I did n't faint away or anything of that sort; but they told me afterwards that I had been sitting on the gunwale to try to weight the boat on the side against the wind, had gone off backward when she nearly upset, and that Mr. Morland, quick as a flash, had thrown himself off the side, keeping hold of the gunwale with one hand and clutching my skirts with the other. I don't know whether he can swim, but I do know that I can't; and if he had been a tenth of a second later, the sloop, whether it overturned or not, would have lurched a rod eastward and left me, head downwards, to take my chances in a bay-full of water and a sky-full of wind.

Well, they pulled me aboard, the sloop righted, and I was the first person to come to my senses — except the captain and Mr. Morland, who kept theirs all the while. By the time I was well on the boat we could see the squall scudding away to the northeast, and in five minutes we were in a dead calm once more. The captain (who, of course, was mate and crew and everything) had hardly spoken ten words on the whole cruise, just sitting with one hand on the wheel and one eye on the sail; but now he shifted his

quid, opened both eyes, drew his tattooed right hand apologetically down his scrubby chin-beard, and said : “ You ’ll have to ’scuse me this time, ladies ; them flaws off Smutty Head comes quicker ’n the devil could wink at his wife.” The next thing was to dry me, which performance I rather enjoyed, as I never was afraid of a bath when I did n’t have to stay wet or sit in a draft ; don’t you remember the old saw ?

“ When the wind blows on you through a hole,
Fall on your knees and pray for your soul.”

But when I crowded into the cabin with poor cousin Lodema — who by this time had palpitation of the heart without her digitalis bottle — and handed out my habiliments one by one to dry on the bow, and thought what it all meant, I knew why chance had led Mr. Morland to ask to be presented to me that night at the party. All I said to him was : “ Thank you with all my heart — even *my* life is worth something to me and more to grandfather ; and all he said was — I *think*, for he spoke very low — “ and maybe most of all to others.”

“ Then it was quieter again, if possible, than it had been before the “ flaw.” All I could think of was the ah-poet’s “ Calm me ! ah ! compose me to the end.” By this time we were all laughing, except my woeful relative, who had crawled from the cabin to the stern ; and for two mortal hours we waited, or watched the seals sunning themselves on the rocks, or tried to weigh as little as possible when the men

got out into the appended rowboat, hitched it to the bow, and rowed us along. At length, what with rowing and a tiny bit of sailing, we got to shore somewhere, the men bought crackers and codfish at a grocery and bunked on the sloop for the night, while the "wimmin-folks" were hospitably taken into a neighboring farm house, where we slept (in August !) on feather-beds under marvellous Joseph's-coat counterpanes, and breakfasted next morning on half-boiled green peas, served with genuine cordiality by a fat woman and her freckled-faced daughter, and liberally consumed by three knife-swallowing men in their shirt-sleeves.

Oh, dear, will this interminable letter never end? Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: we sailed home in a fresh breeze, I caught no cold from the harmless salt water, cousin Lodema was better, and I had saved my life and gained and proved a new friend. Was n't that worth the slight discomfort?

Good-bye — God be with ye — and put down in the Philosophy of Life, —

"From fearful flaws' fierce fury fate forfend."

AMORET.

As the old man slowly read the letter, leaf by leaf, his thin lips shut more tightly over the false teeth, his eyes darkled, and once a tiny spot of red came to his white left cheek. When the last page was finished he deliberately turned again to the first one, and read

the whole once more. The bright spot faded from his cheek, but the old eyes blazed as he walked to the desk in the back of the shop, untied a big package of Amoret's letters, put this new one on the top, tied the bundle with its red tape, crowded it back into its pigeon-hole, and unconsciously spoke aloud: "It has come; I 've expected it; but I 'll save her from that selfish and soulless son of luck!"

That very morning Amoret woke at three o'clock, when the gray morrowtide was brightening in the east, and lay in her bed and thought and thought. At length, when four parallel slats of sunlight appeared upon the wall opposite the window, she rose, put on her wrapper, took from her trunk a little old calf-bound book that had been a favorite almost from childhood, opened it to a familiar page, threw back the shutters toward the yellow sea, fell on her knees in the glow, and read aloud. The podgy volume was old Nicholas Netherwell's "Golden Hopes," and the passage Amoret's eyes and lips followed with the fervor of a mediæval saint, was

A LITANY OF LIFE.

O rosy dawn,

Thou risest from the darkness whence I came;

O rosy dawn,

Thou art the lingering glory of my dream;

O rosy dawn,
Thou shovest me the pathway I must tread.

O golden noon,
The old is new, the new is old ;

O golden noon,
Baptize my yearning soul with fire ;

O golden noon,
Thou art, and so I fain would be.

O hush of even,
Thy dawntide comes never again ;

O hush of even,
Thy day, it is dead, is dead ;

O hush of even,
Thy moment is mine, all mine.

O starry midnight,
Dost thou weep for the day that is past ?

O starry midnight,
Dost thou fear for the morning to come ?

O starry midnight,
May the peace of thy silence be mine.

O day of my birth,
A spark enkindled a clod ;

O day of my birth,
I was, I am, I shall be.

O day of my death,
Thou shalt tear off the veil of the flesh ;

O day of my death,
Thou shalt hide not the secret of being.

O times gone by,
Perennial life is perennial youth.

O times to come,
Perennial life is perennial youth.

O heart, my heart,
Be thou strong and true as the heart of the
worlds.

O friend of my soul,

Bless me with the pathos of thy pleasant smile.

In grassy spring, in odorous summer, in yellow autumn,

 in lonely winter,

 I follow, follow.

When sunlight has never a shadow,

 I follow, follow.

When weary and stricken and old,

 I follow, follow.

When I climb from the grave,

 I follow, follow

 The glory of ultimate Love.

More than once had Amoret taken pleasure
in the resonance of the words, half mystic, all
clear; but now, as they fell from her lips,
their meaning was new.

VIII.

WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

FOR the next few days the old bookseller went about his vocation in a silence deeper than usual, selling lead-pencils or wrapping-paper or arithmetics in a half-abstraction of mind, as though one hemisphere of his brain was doing the petty work of life, while the other was thinking of Amoret, ever of Amoret. His manuscript volume made little progress; he even reviewed some of the fundamental postulates of those scattered and inconsistent dicta which he had ventured to call a *Philosophy of Life*. Scattered—what of it? Could anything be more heterogeneous than this thing we call existence? Inconsistent? What more improbable than that his little girl,—mere pure spontaneous living idyl of nature that she was—should clearly be half infatuated with a being of no more soul or utility, he verily believed, than one of the little vitreous steam-

engines the glass-blowers exhibit: transparent and hollow motion, that is all.

Mr. Welby's egotism had been thoroughly chastened by the experiences of life. Few find it conducive to self-esteem to grow poorer and less potent as years multiply. Nor was there more than a single grain of superstition in one who had for fifty years declared himself free from the fetters forged by the twin-burners of Servetus, and yet had refused to walk in the misty marshes at the foot of the sky-soaring mount of Transcendentalism. But that single grain, which neither his misfortunes nor his liberalism could make him throw away, was a latent belief that there lurked in his brain some unquestionable power of clear-seeing. That his grandmother had been a Scotch-woman and the seventh child of a seventh child was to him merely a laughable coincidence; but that the intuitive theory of morals was true, and that the Oversoul sometimes told the Undersoul what was and was to be, he was forced to admit, or else fall back upon some sort of grim unspiritual materialism. And certain peculiar experiences in his lonely life had convinced him that such foretellings had really come to him, now and then, with a peculiar force and significance.

Well, if his philosophic insight or foresight

was ever needed, it was needed now. That Henry Morland was a soulless selfishness he had no doubt whatever; nor had he much more doubt that Amoret—meeting for the first time a man of unquestionable intellectuality, free from gross qualities, and apparently in need of help—had thrown a warm, yellow nimbus of sainthood around a head that was at best (to vary his steam-engine metaphor) but marble. And now, by the very perversity of ill-luck, merely because he had sat on the same side of the boat in a squall, Morland had seemed to Amoret the savior of her life. Very likely somebody else would have pulled her out if he had not; the squall was quickly over, and the skipper or the cleric's boy might have had time to become the noble rescuer, nor would Amoret have fallen in love with either of them.

But never mind the crookedness of events; she was alive, for which God be praised. What was now to be done? To do nothing was to give Morland a great advantage; to warn Amoret against him would be to make her miserable and probably force her to choose between a visibly dilapidated grandfather and an idealized hero. Again, was he, Thomas Welby, after all, a jealous old curmudgeon, wishing to keep a warm, bright, pure spirit

to himself, instead of letting her love and marry in the way of all the world? Just here, after six hours of thought, the philosopher settled at least one thing: he could and would be willing to think of Amoret as loving and loved otherwise and elsewhere, if all the conditions were as they should be. He himself had married, so had his daughter; marriage was all very well as a temporary expedient, though, like the ancient woman who denounced Universalism, we may hope for something better than all that in the next world; and the poor old man gave a little chuckle as of reviving spirits, under the influence of which, in the next hour or two, he wrote Amoret a brief note which was virtually nothing more than a thank God, with an appended true statement that he had had a very busy day and would soon write more at length.

Just four petty customers crossed his well-worn doorstone on the morrow, and the philosopher was at leisure to write his write and thereby say his say. He had decided, on the whole, not to take his few immediately available dollars and go to Harborside for a talk, for he preferred to trust his poor wisdom to an old pen rather than an old tongue; and after sleeping on it, he had also determined that he would gain rather than lose by frankly

letting Amoret know that he perceived that she was virtually in love, and that Morland was at least “interested”—oh, how mean the phrases! That Morland would make Amoret but a boy’s plaything he did not fear; that his cold lips would turn the kiss of love into the kiss of death Mr. Welby was bitterly apprehensive. But the Philosophy of Life, which he was writing as his one legacy to Amoret, was permeated with the idea that last decisions must rest with the individual; he would send Amoret some extracts from it, which should tell her she was in a labyrinth, give her a thread of help, and leave her tangled feet to make their own way out.

The letter bore to Amoret a ray of sunshine from out the grim clouds and miasmatic fears of Mr. Welby’s past twenty-four hours. All Amoret read or felt, was that her grandfather sent gratitude, love, hope, interest, with an added apprehension for Miss Tetley’s visibly declining health. So much for the letter; but it enclosed a neatly-tied packet, made of Mr. Welby’s most cherished 1809 hand-made paper which Amoret knew so well, sealed with his old PVRSVE VIRTVE seal, and bearing the inscription: “Thoughts for the Dawn of the New Day; to be read next Sun-day morning.” As Amoret looked at it long and long, half in

abashed wonder and half in timid fear that the dear old writer had guessed a secret she refused to know herself, she noticed the glitter of some grains of the familiar black sand he always used to dry his writing-ink. Glitter or black obscurity, what was the message to mean?

Saturday night Morland called earlier than usual. In his manner alternated a tenderness and a gayety which had been somewhat strange to his former moods. He had never taken the slightest advantage of the incident of the rescue, warding off all allusions to it; and to-night, though Miss Tetley, confined to her room, left Morland and Amoret alone, he did not repeat, when an accidental remark of Amoret's gave him opportunity, any such words as he had uttered when first he drew her from the water. Only, through all their random talk about the cruel foam, the uninhabited moon, the canals of Mars, marsh-rosemary, Wordsworth's Recluse, Morland's own unpublished essay on the Poets as Pessimists, two new summer novels, or the question whether purple or yellow is the more queenly color, there was a sort of kindly companionship on both sides that bespoke a mental ease that might, it would seem, become permanent. They were getting to take each other for

granted. When Morland started home his good-bye handshake became a sort of close little clasp that was in no way presumptuous; and he said: "*Auf wiedersehen*; one can't improve on that, if two of our poets *have* made it hackneyed." Amoret retorted: "Which is, being interpreted, *au revoir*; how easy it is to be polyglot!" And she stood at the door until his last footfall fell out of hearing as he turned around the bend in the road.

Next Sunday morning Amoret took her grandfather's little paper packet of thoughts, and went alone to her favorite rock by the sea. The warm sun was high, but the air was full of that sweet combination of ocean saltiness and inland breeze that drops from the skies as a double gift on the waves and crags and hayfields and gnarled appletrees of southern Maine or the tip of Cape Ann. The rich ancient serenity of the outer world befitted her inward, tender, though tremulous content, as she broke the well-known seal, opened the yellowed sheets, and read in the old man's scrupulously clear and not yet senile chirography: —

There are three parts of life: vague before earthly birth; vague after death; dark or clear in the flesh, as we choose.

There are, likewise, three kinds of love: sensu-

ous, intellectual, spiritual : the first dies, the second starves, the third triumphs over space, time, and matter.

Life is complex, from the new-born babe's first glance. What will you take,—the moon, or the rattle, or mother's eyes?

Let us act what we think, yet learn that if love is law, law is love.

Take time ; God's minutes are eternities.

Life in life and death in life— which?

There is no sin to hearts that love, says the poet.
There is no love to hearts that sin.

The nobility of love returns to bless you, though you learn that the one to whom you would fain have given it never really lived.

Remember that the highest woman is purer than the highest man, save one ; do not worship your own image, and dream that you have found the second perfect man.

Are you doubtful? Wait. Are you sure? Then you can afford to wait.

Youth is always detached ; it stands out alone ; it has no background, no history, no intermingling of fibres with other lives ; and to it experience stretches both hands in vain.

The patience of hope is far easier than the patience of an immitigable past.

Oh, for a glimpse of the cool deep mind of God, in our iron darkness and silence!

Love is the one eternal thing in the universe, but yet so fragile that it may be shattered forever by the blow of a look.

Amoret had begun to read with a little flutter in her heart, a chill at the tips of her fingers, and a flush on her cheeks that deepened into crimson and then whitened into pallor as she went on. The real meaning of what her grandfather had written appeared slowly in her face, like the spots that emerge from a hitherto monotonous negative in the developing bath ; and, like them, the brief clearness of the picture faded into obscurity as she laid the little packet of manuscript on the rock at her side, and looked long and long at the blue water, — now shimmering and speckled in the wind, save for one sheet of smoothness far out toward the southeast horizon. She seemed to have grown ten years older, yet not ten years wiser or happier. *Was* she in love, — love that binds all or soon or late ? She had never connected it with her own existence or future, save as she loved her grandfather, the birds and flowers, the hills and waves, and the Whatever that made and continued them. She understood the old man's patiently elaborated enigmas at once ; all her life she had known his fondness for putting the moral universe into paradoxes or pithinesses, and had partly humored him and partly revered him. Never mind the form of these latest Thoughts ; what they meant was that her grandfather thought

she was beginning to love Mr. Morland — Amoret framed his name with difficulty, even in her own mind — that Mr. Morland was possibly but half what she fancied him; and that she must choose. Oh, the pity, the perplexity, the glory! Was it all a woe or a boon? Had her life been embittered by the drops of trial, or was it now to be consecrated by the baptism of a new spirit? Who could tell? Not the ripening morning; not the leisurely notes of the bell-buoy across the channel: "Only I, I, I, all alone with God," thought Amoret, as she lifted her heavy limbs from their rocky seat, and half wearily began her homeward walk, "but neither God nor I just now." And a placid cow, chewing the cud on the sunny slope of the earthworks, turned her a lazy sidewise look, while a grasshopper whirred resonantly in her path.

During the next three or four weeks both Amoret and Morland had plenty of time to think, and their thinking was often of each other. The next time Morland called at the cottage it happened that Amoret and Miss Tetley had gone to drive; and a few days later, by the orders of the elder lady's physician, they suddenly started on a fortnight's trip to the mountains, for the gain of upland air, before the beginning of the school year.

Morland's prevalent mood, during the interval of the absence of the two, was chiefly one of annoyance, the more intense because it was doubled. Constantly—as Rodney had been—accustomed to deal with the world from the standpoint of self, he was similarly vexed that an association which had become a mild but now sufficiently steady pleasure, should be intermittent without his own choice, and he was still more annoyed that he, a mature man and a sociological critic, who prided himself on some supposed emancipation from the cheaper and more obvious human emotions, should be wasting so much time over a girl. One never is more angry at others than when he has cheapened himself in his own mind; and, in Morland's view, it seemed a sort of debasement to feel any need of Miss Wenton's society. Dangling is all very well if you are the conscious dangler; but when volition becomes conditioned, the universe of self is somewhat belittled.

So it was that, one evening, he lit his cigar with some inner acerbity, and indulged in a little light introspection, after eight hours of hack work at his newspaper desk, for it was press-day, and no time was left him to take up his latest anonymous essay to be entitled “Wordsworth as Duffer.” What was the

matter with him, anyway? Was he in love with a pretty schoolma'am because her waist was graceful and her rose-leaf lips innocently pathetic in their curl? He might better leave them to the admiration of the callow collegians who were at this minute, doubtless, inveigling for an introduction to her on the Profile House piazza. Was it her mental brilliancy that attracted him? Certainly she was an "original," which was something, especially for one with theories concerning the social evolution of monotonous mediocrity. Was he flattered by her evident interest in himself? If so, the more fool he to admit it. But he was the preserver of her life! and he gave a little laugh as he knocked off the ashes of his cigar, carefully laid it on the edge of the window-sill so that it should not roll off, and stepped to a cupboard to prepare a small glass of old bourbon whiskey and soda water — "alcohol in its most beneficent form, as every scientific man well knows," said Morland to himself. "A true hero!" said he, as he sipped the last of the pervasive beverage. "Lucky enough that I didn't have to jump overboard, for I might have got drowned — and I want to go to Europe again before my final exit from everything everywhere."

By the time the first copy of his innocuous

weekly was brought up damp from the press-room the cigar and the soda-whiskey had clarified his mind to the extent of a definite reflection that he might as well let things drift. "I am not responsible for the universe, anyway," added Morland to Morland. "I never asked to be born, and dying would save a good deal of trouble; why not take things as they are? But if anybody tried to cross me about little Amoret, or to marry her in dove-love fashion, I'd really like to spoil his nonsense somehow." And then he said to the foreman of the pressroom, who had just come in, "I think you'd better ask Carter to pay a little more for the next ink he buys; I don't care so much about paper, but this ink is rather wishy-washy. Good-night."

As for Amoret, when the train skirted the clear, cool ponds and rolled through the sweet meadows that lie to the eastward of the White Mountain range, and at length climbed into the picturesque defiles of the Notch, her eyes turned to the new wonders with an elation that not even her ever-present problem could quell. Like the railway itself, if she now crawled at the foot of majestic heights, she could at least win by the courage of confident abasement. In her mind, when she thought of Morland and of her grandfather's plain

warning to love worthily, there seemed to rise misty and cloud-crowned summits of eternal joy,—the joy of spiritual triumph; yet as, on her railway journey, the far-down brooks beneath the trestles still sang cheerily on their path to the sea, so her own obedience must concern itself with every-day duties. One fact was a puzzle: her definite sense of humiliation that her grandfather should have felt and said that she was in love—she, the lonely little daughter of the soil, the self-centred friend of thousand-minded nature, the lover only of books and the ideal. A constantly-recurring impulse was to write to him a letter of mere conventionality, and then, on her return, banish Morland to the suburbs of her good pleasure, whatever pain it cost. Against this plan struggled two thoughts,—the one that it would be a real and seemingly unnecessary trial to lose the society of the deepest mind that had ever opened to her own; and the other, that it might be a wrong to refuse to try to throw some sunlight into the dim, sad caverns of a brain that seemed to need some accession of the spiritual to brighten its mere mentality. That some little part of nature's soul lay in her own she was vain enough to think, after all these years; that it was a duty to show it

and share it, in any poor way, she devoutly believed. Mere pity she could never transform into love, but duty seemed divine, and it had almost come to appear a clear duty to discover and uplift the true Henry Morland — for, said she, a child can sometimes stir a great rock. This done, he might go his way and she hers; all of which fine theory or half-formed intention she duly set forth in a long letter to her grandfather, written out of doors beneath the tutelar presence of the august and immitigable Profile, which gave her no small comfort in her present doubts. Then, with the resiliency of girlhood, she proceeded to enjoy every minute of the short weeks of her mountain experiences in woods, by pools, through flumes and trails, and, best of all, in golden sunsets or mute moonrises. If only cousin Lodema would get well a little faster! but, of course, the benefit of the change could not come all at once. At any rate, Amoret's cheer was her cousin's best medicine. One evening, after a day of singular weakness, Miss Tetley, for the first time, spoke of death, and half whispered the lines:—

“ If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea ; ”

but Amoret's laugh rang back with the remark, “ Oh, no, dear; the girls won't lose

you for many a year; school teachers should quote, instead, that other Concord line:—

“‘They reckon ill who leave me out.’”

The days of the vacation drew to a close. Amoret had enjoyed all their variety and novelty in her own way. Essentially lonely from earliest childhood, she yet found a double pleasure in life because of her dramatic sense of the time, place, circumstance in which events or people stood or moved. This sense, which sometimes amounted to anticipatory memory, at first had led her to try to arrange her environment with a somewhat fussy exactitude, or, when she could not, unduly to centre her thoughts upon herself; but later years had made her perceive more clearly the artless unconsciousness of true beauty, and the fact that though man must painstakingly grow, his growth should be toward spontaneous loveliness. The baby wishes everything to suit his whim, and cries for the moon; but the saint's halo is around his own head. So, if Amoret had less freedom than in the old up-river days in the graveyard, she also had found more; for, in learning the bitterness of the problem of choice, she was getting to see the joy of a broadened world. And yet, the wider her

world and the stronger her sense of the beauty of helping others—her cousin, her scholars, Morland, a lame bird, a one-legged grasshopper, a jaded horse, a broken flower-stalk, or a nest of deserted mouselings—the keener was her knowledge, half piteous and half joyous, that nobody knew her real self, in its thoughts and hopes. The true Amoret, after all, was far within her fettering body, with its clumsy scheme of words and looks and hands and feet. She had always felt that if her mother, or Jesus, or some such rare person, could come to life again, either of them would understand it all. That was why the stony calm of the big face on the mountain seemed so restful. "You and I," she said to herself, "partly know each other."

When they returned to Harborside there was plenty to do. Miss Tetley was still rather feeble, so another teacher was engaged, and on Amoret really fell the charge of the school, though neither the public nor the preceptress knew it. There were more girls than ever in the old house, and, thanks to Amoret, more sunshine, which Morland noticed when he made his first prompt afternoon call. He got and he gave a cordial welcome, but in that and subsequent meetings he felt that he had somehow lost ground. At any rate, he was

no longer master of the situation. Amoret was busy, very busy; acquaintanceships settle down, after a while; of course she could not make him a declaration of love or proffer him a certificate of admiration. But it was clear that Amoret, for some reason, with all her simplicity and cordiality, was not to him the Amoret of the summer; there was about her an intangible but vexing air of innocent inaccessibility, or what you will. Some prying devil, thought he, has been warning her to make me play my cards, and show that there are trumps in my hand; if she'd been let alone I could have twisted her about my little finger for three years to come. "Oh," thought Amoret, "if he would give me a chance to see and to help his best self! I'll *make* a chance one of these days, for there must be a great soul behind such a mind." And so their interviews, though nominally of the familiar old summer sort, went along somewhat unsatisfactorily to both of them for two or three months; and Amoret could only dwell on her own inner test principle, reinforced as it had been by Mr. Welby's sententious philosophy, and say to herself, "If he is what I believe him to be, I shall sometime know it at the full."

If but progress, in this world, would sym-

metrically follow commencement, what an advantage to the evolution of things! A hundred thousand barnacle-eggs swish about in the limitless ocean, and only a dozen catch hold of a rock, there to live a life that is merely not death. We visit a new town, and in one day see it all, leaving poor room for expansion in a twelve-month to come. A fresh friendship promises all potencies, and we learn too late that we have travelled over the little soul-plot at the start, and can but retread the familiar round. The child, a poet at five, a soldier at ten, a lover at fifteen, a wiseacre at twenty, declines and decays at last, and so dies and is buried out of mind with the remark, "It was in the order of nature." "That is not life, it's mere vegetation; and lacking at that the patient pleasantness of a grass-blade," Amoret used to say, almost angrily, when she saw so many people about her to whom her gospel of growth was mere chatter. As toward Morland, once in a while, as the winter waned, she came into a mood of indignation that such a man should *need* to be helped; and once, for a blazing quarter of an hour, she fairly hated him because she was satisfied that, when she had been pouring forth her noblest ideals, he had been "drawing her out" by pretended

denials, and smiling in his sleeve at all her eloquence. But, on the whole, meanwhile, neither could banish the other from frequent thought; Amoret, more than ever, because she was really increasingly interested in the complex problems discussed in the essays he begged to read to her for advice and correction, — he was writing a requested series, for the London *Semi-Monthly Review*, on "Problems of Mind and Morals;" and Morland, because, for some occult reason, he would feel his essentially small world still more shrunken without Amoret. In fact, they were drawn together by one common bond, namely, Amoret's interest in him and his interest in himself.

Over against her wish, almost devout, to consecrate him to all good things, beginning with the ethical gain to the world from the Problems articles, was a somewhat strengthening idea, on his part, of making Amoret marry him, if necessary to keep her from marrying somebody else, or from throwing herself away on some dream of philanthropic helpfulness, of which fate for her he was almost equally afraid. That he could make her marry him he was satisfied, if he put the demand on the ground of duty to a struggling soul, and to other strugglers whom they two

could influence. But meanwhile he very well knew that his one rival was Amoret's better self, and he was now satisfied that his path to the ownership of her was greatly hindered by that old fool of an egotistic potterer up the river. The journalist's cleverness was as quick as the philosopher's insight, and if the bookseller read Morland's selfishness before he ever saw him, Morland quite as easily divined from Amoret's occasional admiring quotations that the bookseller was constantly stuffing her head with foolish notions of impracticable perfection. "What damned nonsense the Golden Rule is!" said he one day, in the freedom of his editorial room, after he had, with peculiar difficulty, restrained himself from expressing his real opinion of a letter of Mr. Welby's which Amoret had read to him, with the remark that she thought her grandfather a living illustration of that aureal maxim. "Put into practice, it would reduce the world to a dead level in twenty-four hours. Evolution proves the individual, and not society, to be the germ of improvement, and the individual must get for himself what best suits him. I'll go up and talk to the old fellow sometime; I can convert him easily enough, for he's liberal in a sort of way."

And Morland did go to Bellwood one week

in spring, when Amoret had repaired thither for a visit to the old home. By chance, he said, he must go to the north of the state on business for his paper. Might he stop off a day or two on his return and see the good man and the old elm-shaded streets of which he had heard so much? Amoret could but assent, and the three were therefore together in Bellwood, — Morland in the biggest chamber of the Bellwood House. "Grandpa will see what he really is," said Amoret to herself. "Now I shall prove that I am right," thought the bookseller. "I'll take his measure and get rid of him somehow," reflected Morland. After two days of talk between the elder and the younger man, as warm as sunlight glittering on ice, Amoret felt that they surely must respect each other's powers; but she did wish they could seem to like each other a little better. Grandfather, she feared, was confirmed in his unswerving prejudice; and Morland, as he beheld at close quarters the girl's affection for the old man, only consoled himself with the evident proposition that the venerable relic could n't last long.

But the ancient sun settled all their difficulties at last — Sol, reverend outpourer of light and life on a waiting world, that sheds its gracious glory even on the sterile and airless

satellite which gratefully becomes a silver mirror hung on the wall of night. The steadily strengthening rays of the luminary slowly spread from south to north, and the snows of the wintry hills grew shrunken and hollow and thin, and at length dissolved in chilly waters that filled the brooks that swelled the rivers running southward from pine-environed lakes. Once more, in the perennial miracle of a new heavens and a new earth, the old stream behind the bookseller's shop began to rise and crack its weakened ice-coat. There was open water on the banks, and the lines of disused sleigh-tracks from shore to shore showed that the ice-bridge was but a memory. Then there appeared a patch of smooth black water below the island, and at last, with stately swing, or complaining creak, the ice began to go out. And still the river rose, as the thicker masses came down from the farther north; rose little by little to the tops of the wharves, then stretched back toward the foundations of the shops, while in the middle of the stream one straight, desperate current swept steadily on, with never a thought of the eddies on either side, and indifferent whether the cakes it hurried forward were a handbreadth long or a hundred feet.

The snows of that winter had been unusually heavy, especially in the woody regions of the interior, and the spring floods were correspondingly vigorous when the breakup came. An ice-dam, too, had formed at the Point, three miles below, and the water speedily backed up behind a barrier that for the present seemed as strong as granite. Hour by hour it crept nearer the cellars of the Water street stores, which, indeed, were usually wet at this time of year, and sometimes flooded. The occupants of the buildings on the river line knew what to expect in any ordinary freshet; but Mr. Welby did not worry, for it was long since the basement of the old printing establishment had been used for any service more important than that of a woodshed, and now there was left in it little more than half a cord of sawed and split and a modest pile of green four-foot wood, to which a brief bath would bring no lasting injury. Others along the street, however, were not so fortunate; and as evening deepened, they shook their heads and hoped the ice-dam would break before morning, else there must be some moving of goods. The idea of moving them that night was not in accordance with Bellwood precedents.

Still the surly river swelled backwards and

upwards; and if Amoret had not known, by annual experience, the firmness of the granite foundations of the heavy brick building, she might have felt nervous about going to sleep near such a neighbor as the icy and turbulent torrent. But often, in childhood, had the swish and the grinding of the flood lulled her to sleep; and at nine o'clock, when Morland went home, and grandfather and granddaughter went to bed, tired by a day of talk, and walk, and watch, the river was yet eight or ten feet below the legend chiselled on the south wall of the old printery recording the unprecedented height attained by the great freshet of 1811.

By twelve o'clock, however, Amoret was wakened by excited talk and shouted orders in the street, and by an unfamiliar smell, half earthy, half chemical. Dressing hastily and going to the back window, she looked out on what she could see of the immitigable sweep of dark waters. A strong gust of warm south wind slammed the half-open shutter back in her face, but not before she saw dull masses of smoke pouring out of the back windows of the building next but one north, — the quarters of a dealer whose former sellings of E. and W. I. Goods and Groceries, as recorded on a battered and scarcely legible sign high up on

the front of his building, had yielded to the more aristocratic vending of Flour, Grain, Coal, Lime, and Cement. This time the freshet had literally caught him napping, with fifty barrels of lime on a floor usually safe, but now reached by the quick upward tide. The lime slackened, the hot, stifling smoke made it impossible to hoist more than a few barrels out of the pit, and soon the waters, in grim paradox, set the ancient warehouse on fire,—a dead, steady, inaccessible, sizzling, smoking conflagration, that fed on the dry timbers and was fanned by the wind that swept freely through the windows just opened to let out the suffocating fumes. That most fearful of country cries, “Fire! fire!” rose on the street, first from a few excited throats, and then from many, as boys and half-dressed men rushed down the highway, deserted as usual at that late Bellwood hour. Then the Orthodox bell began to ring in alarmist, secular fashion, so different from its decorous Sunday call, and by the time the smaller bell in the Calvinist Baptist steeple followed suit, the two hand fire-engines of the village rattled on their way to the scene, the Lion a little ahead; she was an older tub than the Niagara, but had more of “the boys”—perennial youths from twenty to sixty years of age—in her company.

“Water had begun the fire; let water, by hydropathic homœopathy, put it out,” said Squire Bennett. But the situation was too serious for anybody to pay attention to his joke. The south wind, though warm, was now a gale, the sky was black, the front of the warehouse was half invisible for smoke, and at length little flames appeared through the round hole of a wooden shutter on the second story front. The firemen of one engine carried their hose up through a building north of that first attacked and began to play on the roof, while those of the other undertook the protection of property on the street. All thoughts of saving the structure already on fire were now given up.

Amoret had waked her grandfather, who did not lose his head, though for sixty years he had never seen danger in the familiar row now so imperilled. The south wind seemed to leave his own quarters safe, and telling Amoret not to stay in the building, and not to go too near the fire, he ran as fast as his thin legs would carry him to help remove other folks’ goods in the apparent path of disaster, should, as on the whole seemed probable, the flames not be confined to their source. Busily enough did he and his old friend the grocer toil in getting ready for the worst in

the shop of the latter; everybody else was too busy, or too excited, or too curious to give them any help. "You'd better watch your own place; you've thought of yourself last ever since you were born," said Mr. Hendrickson, in a shrill voice, as with trembling hands he gathered into his arms an account-book, a tea-canister, and a small pair of scales.

"Oh, no," said the bookseller, "I'm all right, and you may be all wrong."

Meanwhile Morland had hurried down from the hotel and speedily met anxious-faced Amoret, key in hand, on the corner opposite the book-shop. "Oh, Mr. Morland," said she, "you didn't have to save my life the second time, did you? but *do* you think our place will burn? I don't dare leave it or stay in it, and grandpa has gone somewhere. Won't you take this key, though the door's open, while I go and hunt him, and then I'll be right back if anything happens." Amoret's mind, to tell the truth, was for the moment in the state of that of Saint Peter on the mount. "And here's grandfather's pet book of writing," added she; "I was sure if anything happened he'd want it most of all, so I ran up stairs and got it out of the desk in the dark; I knew just where it was. Do keep it for him; you're a man and I'm only a

woman; and don't let anything happen to it for the world." And she started away.

"Amoret, Amoret," said Morland, for the first time calling her by her Christian name as, whelmed with an irresistible passion, he seized her hand in a vise-like grip, "you've given me his old Philosophy book that he values most in the world save one thing, and that's yourself. Give me that, too, and I'll worship book, heart, and him all the rest of the days of all of us."

A gust of the wind suddenly veering to the north had blown his hat from his head. The glare of the fire shone full on his pale face, marked with an intensity of purpose Amoret had never before seen. Just then the roof of the burning warehouse fell, a tower of sparks shot skyward, and the picture was reflected in eyes that seemed fairly to burn into her soul. Amoret wondered if she were alive, or if this sudden wild drama was a dream — here within a few feet of her childhood's home, where every brick and stone was familiar, fire and water, the foes, were fighting hand in hand towhelm the familiar old shops, the while Morland, perhaps the man of men she had ever known, was asking to be her servant and friend. Her brain whirled, and for absolute physical lack of power to stand, she half fell

against him, swiftly thinking that he had, after all, fitly chosen a woeful time to proffer help, and had proved himself to be all she had hoped, by his linking together in utter unselfishness herself, the dear old man, and his poor, beloved, wise-foolish book. An instant vision of perfect, large life for the three, in which each should strengthen each by giving strongest to weakest, flashed through her mind, and she hurriedly said, "Oh, perhaps, perhaps; I can't think now, I must go to find him," and ran past the excited groups up street.

The veer of the wind had saved the buildings to the north, but the bookstore was now in danger. The volunteer firemen broke in its doors, rushed up stairs, and threw open the wooden shutters to toss furniture out, if need be, or let water in; thereby, with rural fatuity, doing the worst thing possible by letting the fierce drafts of wind suck through. Morland took the lead in helping, and as there was ample time for salvage, walked quickly in and out with great armfuls of the books his instinctive glance told him were the most valuable, trying the while to restrain willing but clumsy hands from carrying out wall-paper and children's slates, and the ten-cent sidewalk book-box, instead of heavy cases of old

calf-bound tomes, or a portfolio of irreplaceable prints.

Meanwhile the old man was back again, breathless and feeble from his needless tasks of self-sacrifice amid Hendrickson's raisins and sugars, and now confronted by the probable ruin of his life-long home. Amoret had found him without trouble, coming out of the grocery, and had got from him a solemn promise not to go into his own shop after one single little flame of fire should burst from it, at the same time telling him that "The Philosophy of Life" had been saved first of all. What Morland was doing they both could see, — displaying, as he was, that directive power which so often makes a white-handed college man a better helper in an emergency than fireman or fisherman or carpenter knows how to be.

But Bellwood had not yet filled up the measure of an excitement unparalleled for a quarter of a century. Fast and far and furious flew the sparks, or bits of burning shingles as big as a man's hand, endangering more than one house in the village; so that some of the weary crew of firemen had to go home to pour pails of water on their own house-roofs. Just as four men were staggering across the street with the biggest case of books in Mr. Welby's

shop, one of them looked over the opposite roofs and shouted, "See that light way over there on the steeple!"

A flying torch had kindled the tower far above the belfry of the Orthodox meeting-house, and a little colony of flame, in the stiff breeze, was running around the telescopic Sir Christopher Wren spire that had so long stood out against the west sloping hill. After much excited talk, the new danger to the whole village seemed to demand that the old Lion should be taken to the vicinity of the church, at least to play upon the roof; for the fire on the river street might perhaps be checked at the wide wharf-way below Welby's, even if the bookstore, as now seemed likely, should go.

The better half of the bookseller's goods had now been taken out and carried well up the cross-street, where Amoret, with a queer sense of the pitifulness of it all, saw some of her childish playthings piled pellmell on a hair-cloth sofa that had belonged to her mother's scanty wedding outfit, on which sofa the little girl of years ago used to play ship. Smoke was now leaking from half-a-dozen windows in front of the bookshop; the apothecary's, next door, was apparently doomed; and in dreary exhaustion Mr. Welby was seated on a

doorstep on the other side of the street. Having refused to take a sip from the whiskey-flask Morland ran over to proffer him, he was helplessly waiting for the end. Meanwhile, when half the crowd had run to the new scene of danger, a little girl, who had been standing too near the original conflagration, fell to the earth with a shriek; a falling pane of glass had cut her left cheek and apparently blinded an eye, which was covered with a red stream. Amoret picked her up and ran with her in search of warm water and bandages, and it was half an hour before she thought again of bookstore, grandfather, or Morland.

Then it was, in the little time of her absence, in the small hours of that lurid spring morning by the river, that the devil came forth from the flames and tempted man and man fell; but the flames were not those of the burning buildings, but those of his fiery heart.

IX.

TIME'S FOOL.

IT all happened so quickly, the cutting of the threads that bound three lives together. Amoret had gone on her errand of mercy, and the fire had settled into that steady, irrevo-cable spit and crackle and glow and tumble that denote a conflagration hopeless, yet not increasingly dangerous. The wind had died away, and though the church, as well as the three old shops on the river street, were plainly doomed, there seemed little likelihood of further spread of the flame-foe. Then it was that Morland caught sight of old Welby sitting wearily on the doorstep across the way, watching the fate of the bricks and boards that had been his home and workshop for a lifetime.

"Well, Mr. Welby," said Morland, "it's pretty bad; but you and Amoret are safe, any-way, and here's your book of books, without a singe on a single leaf."

Amoret had already told him of its safety, so now he took the volume from Morland's

hand with a weary grasp, a listless eye, and a faint "thank you." No sooner had he touched the old leather-bound tome, however, than he gave a start from his lowly seat. Weight and feeling had told him instantly that it was not the volume whose every atom he knew so well, by long and loving use, that he could have recognized it by a sixth sense of apprehension had he gone to get it in black midnight in some impossible place. The old volume Morland now gave him was of the same size, it had chanced to be in the same desk, and so Amoret had caught it up because of location rather than identity. The slowly-filled jottings toward vital philosophy had been made in a disused blank book that had come down from the thrifty business days of the printing-house, — a journal, or invoice, or day-book, or something of the sort. Knowing her grandfather's inveterate and mysterious reverence for his self-imposed task, Amoret had never handled the manuscript volume, nor would she have ventured, in a less critical time, to try to open the ark and rescue the covenant. No wonder, then, that she made so disastrous a mistake in her swift excitement; the old man could not blame her. But the precious pages — what was to become of them now, unwittingly left in the furnace of fire? Into them,

for many a year, his slow right hand had been trying to put the quintessence of his own soul and wit. Its covers included his sum-total, for good or bad, and therefore could hardly have failed to bind up some little, modest egotism, some personal sense of value born at least of toil and ambition, if worthless otherwise. But more: Mr. Welby had all along meant this scattered record to be his best, almost his only, legacy to Amoret herself; and now that she was half in the toils of one whom, despite some external helpfulness, he instinctively felt to be conscienceless and utterly unworthy of her, the "Philosophy of Life" appeared to be of more value than all else that could burn in the store, or in the street, or in the church itself. It must not perish; he would save it; not an instant was to be lost.

"Mr. Morland," said he, with the solemn precision that sometimes attends times of greatest excitement, "this is not the right book; I must go and get the other one," and he started totteringly toward the burning building. Flames curled from the roof and blazed from the river end, while even the front door and windows were half invisible for smoke.

"It is not safe, sir; you must not go," said Morland, rising, and instinctively clutching

his arm, the while three spirits seemed to scream into the younger man's ear, all in a single second. And the first said, "Go yourself." And the second said, "Neither may go." And the third said, "Let him go, be rid of him, and Amoret is yours."

They started across the street, the editor's hand still on Welby's arm. Morland gave a hurried look up and down, and saw that they two were unobserved at the moment, by the firemen or the jaded or idle men and boys scattered along the thoroughfare; for the eyes of all were fixed on flames high in air, rather than on doorways or rubbishy sidewalks in front of the fire-doomed shops. Then there rushed on his mind nothing less than the whole thought of the relation of the present moment to the future of the three — to their future on earth, that is to say, for there is no other future. Now or never was his time to apply common sense to the situation. What was the good of mentality if it could not make years swing on the pivot of a second? Amoret loved him; old Welby had some senile, jealous, fussy dislike of him that was sure to be an annoyance so long as the septuagenarian crawled or mumbled into dotage, and possibly might spoil everything, what with Amoret's sentimental, feminine ideas of duty. Duty?

What is duty? Ask nature. It is the individual's care of self as he seeks his best good. Deny it if you dare, and accept the alternative of providing for age, imbecility, pauperism, superfluity, at the expense of youth, vigor, productiveness, usefulness. Why, even the North American Indians, or the Spartans, knew better than that. Old Welby had done his work; what right had he to interfere to the bedevilment of a chance for a most interesting experiment, should Morland conclude to marry Amoret? His old rubbishy proverbs would be no loss any way, but let him save them if he could; nobody asked him to write them or to rescue them; on his own head be the risk. In fact, would it not be a sort of poetic euthanasia for his atoms to dissipate in flame along with those of his house, and notes, and shop? And would n't it be better, if you must talk about ethics, for Amoret to lose her grandfather for five years, maybe, than to lose the chance of forty years with himself? One need be no more afraid of death than of life —less, for that matter. Even the Christians call death for others the supreme good; very well, let the old fellow attain it by dying for Amoret and him; who would deny him such a privilege? You must decide some things quickly in this world, if all such thoughts as

these come crowding on your mind while you pass through a flash of time and a rod of space; so Morland was sure that he rose superior to the accidents of circumstance and prejudice when to the half-crazed old man's second appeal for release he said, "All right, then, be careful," let go his arm, and saw him rush through the smoky door. It was mere chance that Morland simultaneously looked up and down the street to reassure himself that the disappearance had been unperceived by anybody else; and that he thought he would walk briskly up to the burning church on the hill, now really a pretty spectacle in its heavenward pyre of sheeted flame. "You wouldn't believe," said he to himself, "that a man could disappear in that way with so much light in so many people's eyes; perhaps it was that last puff of downward smoke that covered him. But we scientists should never forget that it is the improbable that must often be accounted for."

Amoret, meanwhile, had cared for her little sufferer as quickly as was possible for sympathetic fingers, and hurried back to find her grandfather. That she did not see him at once was no marvel, but when she had run up and down the street for some minutes, inquiring with ever-gaining anxiety concerning his

whereabouts, and had got no information of any satisfactory kind, she began to be alarmed. Yes, he had been seen quite lately; he had been sitting on a doorstep on the west side of the street; and that was all. Where had he gone? there was no new danger to call him away; the property saved from the bookstore was well guarded, nor had Mr. Welby visited the pile for an hour, she was told. Could he have gone, from mere curiosity, to the burning church? It was unlikely, in his weary state; but where else could he be? Where too, was Morland? Amoret had not met him in her new huntin's, and could only learn from a bystander, who chanced to know him by sight, that he had been on the street in the vague period "within an hour or two." Nobody had seen the two men together, but by the perversity of horror the thought flashed into Amoret's tired brain that they might have gone into the burning building for some last rescue. Morland, said she to herself, would be the very man to try to help poor grandfather in that way, at the risk of his own life. Impossible! somebody would have seen them, even if nobody had prevented such foolhardiness.

In despair, Amoret turned up the hill toward the burning church, now a glorious spectacle. The first dispersed light of dawn over the pine-

clad eastern hills was beginning faintly to rival the glow of the flame, when, far up in the fire-girt tower, the bell tolled its own knell by striking four an instant before steeple, bell, clock and all shivered, leaned, and fell backward through the red-skeleton roof. A shower of sparks, a pillar of fire by night, rose majestically skyward, and by their light Amoret saw the pale face of Morland standing at a safe distance, and looking upward with that pure, ethereal gaze she had always connected with his best moods.

She rushed up and took his hand with a clutch in which new love and newer despair seemed to combine; he was all she had for the moment. "Where is grandfather?" she gasped, with strained voice and eager eyes, in a child's assurance that he must know all, or that his lack of knowledge would be something to cling to. Morland was more startled by her apparition than so calm a being had ever before been in all his self-centred days; he had not expected to see Amoret just then, nor had he ever beheld on her face such distraught anxiety; youth and beauty had, for the time being, become agonized age. How much did she know? he wondered. A slight flush, as of mirrored coals, rose to his cheeks, and his throat was half locked as he said, in

reply, "Where is Mr. Welby, dear? How should I know? I've been up here for an hour; isn't he on the street? I spoke to him a while ago when he was down there."

Morland wanted to make the time of his absence as long as possible, but Amoret hit at once, with woman's clear, incisive justice, on the very word he thought the safest. "An hour, Mr. Morland? Oh! how could you leave him? Didn't you know I was away? and I'm sure it wasn't thirty minutes!" "I missed him when you were gone," said Morland, now in full possession of his powers, "and came up here to see if he was n't at the second fire."

"And you've been here an hour and have n't seen him! Oh, Mr. Morland, we must go back right away and find him, if we ask every man, woman, and child on the street where he is! Come!" said she, simply, with iron will, as she grasped his hand again in cold immitigability.

There was nothing for the modern Cain to do save to become his brother's keeper. Down the street they went; Amoret made no concealment of her agony of suspense, and her queries were fast and almost fierce, but nobody could reassure her save by general remarks that he "must be all right."

"If 't were n't that he had his book," said she, in a new thought, "I'd be sure he had gone back for it; but you gave it him, didn't you?" she exclaimed, with the precision that clung to every known fact in the awful puzzle.

"Yes," said Morland simply; "the last time I saw him."

"But that was after you left me, and I had given it to you," said she. "That couldn't have been an hour ago," she added, unsuspectingly; "you could n't have been up there as long as you thought."

Morland grew uneasy, but felt that in the affair, however it ended, nothing could ever be definitely known. It must have ended by this time, for the shop was now nearly consumed. Welby had not reappeared, nor could he be thought to have survived, soliloquized the one man who knew of his fate. He had often reflected that folks who told the whole truth told something more than the truth, that is to say, progressive scientific truth. To wait, to be calm, and to let Amoret's visible need of him be the magnet to draw her to him in the days to come, was a policy so obvious that there was not the slightest use of hurry. A few quiet words of reassurance and consolation were all that would ever be necessary, nor were they needed yet; it was enough to

urge Amoret not to worry, for the old man must be somewhere all right; nobody would have dreamed of going into the building for an hour or more past.

Everybody else thought and said the same thing, except lame, witless Alice, who came stumbling up to the two, all breathless and muddy. Amoret had befriended the child of yore, and Alice was always hanging about her, when allowed, in humble, dog-like adoration. Excitement now, however, unlimbered her dull tongue to say, "Oh, Miss Amoret, oh, mister! did he come out the front way or the back way?"

"What do you mean, child?" said Amoret, wondering if her own brain would cease to do its work, and her legs fail to support her body.

"Oh! the back way's all water and the front way's all fire! and I see yer mister and yer grandfather a goin' in; but the new mister jest stopped, 't was so smoky, and Mister Welby, I guess he went ahead; and I watched and watched, and he didn't come out, and I told everybody, and they said I was crazy Alice! but I ain't crazy, and I see Mister Welby, and he didn't have his hat on, and then this mister went up the hill, and I thought he must have knowed yer grand-

father 'd come out somehow, an' I donno how, for I 've watched 'im and he 's been all alone till yer come, and I knowed he would n't go off till he come out too; but he ain't with you, and I don' know, I don' know nothin' more," and Alice stopped for mere lack of breath.

"*Went in!*" said Amoret, in terror. Her heart fairly stopped beating while she clutched the child with icy hand; "went in alone, and Mr. Morland was with him and saw him?"

Alice nodded her head in the vociferousness of affirmative. To believe her was impossible, to doubt all truth in her statement was to throw away the one hideous gleam of light on the mystery.

"Amoret," said Morland, who felt that he must play trumps against luck, "the child is crazy, and your own brain is fairly reeling; let us go and find some place for you to rest."

"Alice," said Amoret, unheeding him, "Alice, dear, you must have dreamed it; this has been an awful night for us all, enough to turn a stronger head than yours."

"Oh, no, I did n't, Miss Amoret," said she, gaining breath. "This mister he guv Mister Welby a book, and Mr. Welby guv a groan and throwed the book away, and I picked it up, and here it is; and then Mister Welby said, oh dear, he must go and get the tother

one, and then he went, and I don't guess he got it after all;" and Alice's left hand dived under her dirty skirt and handed Amoret a book, half-bound in old Russia leather, and labeled "Invoice."

Amoret mechanically took it, opened its leaves, half-written over with old business accounts of the publishing firm, and recognized it at once by a crack in the top of the back of the binding, in which she had caught her finger when, a few hours ago, she had got this very volume from the upstairs desk. It was the book that she had transferred to Morland for safe keeping, and it was not "The Philosophy of Life." And there burned into Amoret's mind, in intense and immitigable and irrefutable clearness, a tenfold horror, in which culminated all the woes of that night of nights. She had got the wrong book; Morland had given it to her grandfather, who had rushed to his death in the furnace of his own home and his own hopes; and Morland—Morland—Henry Morland—had let him, and then had gone up the hill to watch a steeple tumble down. And this was the culmination of the wealth of life; this her hero; this the revelation of a supreme moment.

Amoret turned toward him with the stony look of a sphinx set on a judgment throne.

What to do or say he knew not for the moment; even the heirs of all the ages are not infallible on the instant; and against that look he could but stutter a few words that not one of the three — Amoret, crazy Alice, or himself — really heard. Between them had come a century of years and a universe of morals; that was all.

The man was the first to speak again. "Amoret," said he, "if you have loved me ever so little, hear me now or hear me by and by, when you are calmer. You and I ought to be able to live by the higher truth and the greater good; you will see that it was best for us both;" but he visibly trembled.

All Amoret ever said to him again was spoken that moment, after a pause that was bitter to both, and seemed never to end. "Mr. Morland," said she, in a voice that sounded as strangely to her own ears as to his, "you are more dead than my poor grandfather you let go to his death, for you never lived; I have dreamed you;" and she turned her face from his forever.

Dawn grew apace, and the wild and woful night was over. For long did the little town tell and re-tell the vicissitudes of those lurid and awful hours; but upon none of them did the babblers and wiseacres more fondly dwell

than upon the strange escape of old Mr. Welby. With many a variation and expansion, many a query and asseveration and denial, did town-talk say how he had rushed through stifling smoke to the back room of the second story of his bookstore, rescued from a desk an old book on which, said one, he "sot everythin' — mebbe 't was old accounts he thought he might collect;" found his way of exit to the street cut off; become confused by the heat and well-nigh suffocated by the smoke; struggled down stairs by a back way, he hardly knew how, and by the good luck of very fatuity, when his wits were all gone, thrust a heavy wooden shutter through a window and trusted himself thereto as upon a raft to sail down the ice-flood flood of the freshet. Starting on his voyage so far from the centre of the current, he chanced soon to drift ashore, and was found, half fainting and half frozen, beside a coal shed, no more than two hundred feet below, with the drenched book beneath his rusty coat. The news of his rescue flew apace; a crowd gathered, for the fires were now nearly burned out, and a dozen tender hands bore him to Squire Bennett's, where he lay in mere feebleness for a week, but began, after a fortnight, under Doctor Urquhart's cheery care, to get over the shock.

The doctor gave him so little medicine that Mr. Welby could hardly account for the fact that each day brought new strength, unless it was because, having been assured that he had no physiological right to die, he felt that a relapse would be illogical. When he began to talk much, a favorite theme was Doctor Urquhart's intuitive perception and common sense; but Amoret was inclined to apply the related adjective commonplace to man and method. The doctor, she admitted, had a pleasant face and knew when to hold his tongue; for the rest, he seemed to let things drift, while nature did the curing.

Bellwood, as became a provincial town, did not quickly recover from its draught of excitement; but of all its people Amoret, in those sequent days, was the serenely quiet one; anybody might have thought her a marble statue had not her few words been so kindly and her hand-touch so soft. That her face was pale was no wonder; had not her grandfather lost his livelihood and narrowly escaped with his life? It was lucky, folks said, that Amoret had a good place, and that her schoolmistress was willing to let her off for a few weeks; while they noted, with considerable unanimity, that she was "a good deal of a girl."

Down went the river water; the day after the fire the charred, fallen timbers were picked up from the streets in front of the long-to-be-vacant black holes where the stores and the church had been; and then breakfasts were eaten and tenpenny nails sold as before. One more sensation, however, was to follow the parlous time: Death was to have its victim, if balked of its chance of the bookseller.

"Kind of funny, wasn't it?" said sapient Gossip; "friend of Amoret's, just stopping over for a train or two. I would n't wonder a bit if he died of heart-disease; he must have been excited, and those city fellows aren't used to hard work; besides, those that saw him said he did n't look over strong. Wish 't had been Jones that saw him first, instead of Urquhart; he'd have let folks know what he thought about it. I hate a doctor that never says nothing; seem's though the public had some rights. Some folks said he was hanging around Amoret. Well, there's all sorts of talk, and I suppose he was pretty well known down to Harborside; but what I guess is that he was a Catholic priest in disguise. Amoret would n't have had him, anyway, and he could n't have married her if she would; and if he *was* a priest, it's just as well he's out of the way. They said his poor old mother

was kind of glad he was found where he was, for she was sure he 'd been a-praying; but his father didn't like it quite so well. Did Amoret see his folks when they came to take the body away? Well, there, I never thought to ask."

If Fact had been minded—as, according to custom, it was not—to tell the community the truth, it would have said this:—

When Amoret gave Morland a last leaden look and turned northward up the blighted street, he was left in a mental state of which deep and all-pervading annoyance was the chief element. Accustomed all his life to be and say and do what he chose, in a reticent and refined loyalty to the thought of personal advantage, things seemed sadly askew when they failed to happen as he wished. Ever since Amoret had made that miserable visit to the mountains he had felt his power over her wane, what with time, luck, grandfather, and all. The cards were no longer in his own hand, and so, without conscious misplay in his intellectual game, things had somewhat passed beyond his control. Having had, at least, the good sense to wait, to make no scene, and to betray no undue interest, everything had at length come right again for a moment, thanks to this tempest in a local

teapot, but only to go disgustingly wrong at last. If that idiotic brat had never cursed the world, to come tattling the devil's mischief! And then old Welby's book—and Morland laughed hollowly to himself as he thought of its perversely important part in the recent fiasco play. Well, book and Welby were gone, he himself was gone, everything was gone; for when pride departs whoever will may have the rest.

Just what was next to do he knew not! Get out of Bellwood in decent obscurity and go back to his tiresome paper and his rubbishy essays? What was the good of proving or disproving anything, or pottering away over problems and essays thereon? The only decent thing for a man to do before he dies is to work; but what is the use of work? For yourself? you die and lose it all. For others? the higher you raise them the greater their ultimate fall into nescience and obscurity. The earthworm suffered less than man, and the molten rock less than the earthworm.

Then there flashed into his mind Swinburne's line: "Now what a thing it is to be an ass!" By this time he was walking up deserted Union street toward the top of the hill. It was getting light, but nobody saw him, and nobody would have known him if

seen; that at least was good luck. To be made ridiculous by the top-lofty righteousness of a schoolteacher and the timely tattling of a non-compos! high fate for a critic of civilization! Amoret would never tell; Morland almost wished she would, for then he would have a little comfort in his self-despite. It would be a friendly service if there could be pinned on his back one of the labels affable schoolboys affix to each other: "Somebody please kick me."

Well, then, should he show his magnitude and manliness by dismissing this whole episode as one more proof of the general reign of folly and perversity in the world? Why trouble any more with such a world, anyhow? Suppose he were to quit it — now would be as good a time as any, and he would save ten days or ten years or fifty years of drudgery. Suicide for disappointed love, the world might say? Not a bit of it; no one would guess it, not even Amoret. He had often thought of quitting things if they became really annoying, and certainly he was at this minute a trial to himself. He never asked to be born, and he had a perfect right to die. What was it that fine old pessimist said: "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou

goest." Exactly; he could put himself on a dead level with Plato and Theodora in ten minutes. The game is not worth the candle; blow out the light and there you are. It would really be a good joke to kill yourself — not because you cared so much for Amoret, but because you cared so little; and besides, it would serve her right. He knew her well enough to know that the thought of such an exit on his part would be to her a lifelong misery; a just punishment for her procrastination to begin with, and her dulness in failing to see the large advantageousness of taking his say-so to end with. She, too, would sooner or later come to this same boon of oblivion; but meanwhile let her suffer; such simpletons ought to make their own bed and lie in it.

What was he doing? making faces at Fate when he dared not defy her? Did he really dare to carry out this whim of the moment? It was no whim; it had been a thought of years. A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on, and are punished — the Hebrews were politic as well as pessimistic. At any rate, now was a good time to try a little experiment. Would twice his occasional luxurious dose of Indian hemp be an overplus? If no, luck would tell

him to live a while longer; if yes, then the devil take the hindmost: to wit, Mademoiselle Amoret Wenton, of Bellwood, present.

Out came a little bottle from a morocco case well-worn by long carrying; there was a troublesome swallowing, and Henry Morland stood on the borderland between two worlds — no, not that, on the edge of the only world. Was he to tumble off? He glanced down the hill at the two columns of gray smoke, pale and thin in the early sunlight, and was rather surprised at the trifling change wrought in him, at the start, by a possibly irrevocable step. If he ever came out of this he would give science the benefit of his experiences. He might imagine a numbness and prickling in his left foot, but that was the bootmaker's fault; the boot had seemed tight before, and had got wet at the fire.

Why take the trouble to climb that hill, when you can just as well walk down as up? So he crossed to Academy street and sauntered down. A rooster on a fence saw him, abbreviated his crow and hurriedly and awkwardly hopped down and ran across the street in front of him. They used to say that animals perceived impending death in man; a pig sees the wind, and it is blood-red; was the chanticleer frightened? He might try

to pet the first dog he saw. There goes one: "Come here, sir!" The puppy ran readily up, with a quickly wagging tail, a deprecatory air, and an increasingly grovelling gait, and finally threw himself on his back before the poison-taker, his tail still trying to wag. "Not much terror there," said Morland; "perhaps my time has n't come yet. But, my boy, you and I will turn up our toes for good and all before a great while, whatever happens;" and he stooped to pat the puppy. As he did so there came a slight ringing in his ears, the sky flushed with pink, and he staggered a little. "Better not try that again; what was it the ethical spouter used to say about man's privilege to stand erect? I doubt if I stand erect much longer, but I may as well while I can. I've had at least one poor goodness in my life; never asked anybody to boost me up.

"Rather pretty view that; feel as though I'd like to have something to take hold of; that's why lamp-posts are useful; wish I had a cane. Why not sit down? If I do I may have to stay; better keep going. What a noise the river makes! you could hear it twenty miles off. My left leg don't seem to care to keep step with the right.

"Suppose I do die, why make a spectacle of myself by being found out here? First,

they'd think me drunk, and then they'd wonder who'd killed me. Why not go into the next yard, or this one, and sit down under a tree? What's this? little church? door open as early as this? Catholic; have n't been in a church for twenty years; might go and rest a bit; very likely this mean feeling will pass away; I believe I feel a little better already; of course one could n't take such a dereliction without some shiver of result.

"Hard work up that procession; dark was the willow wan; oh, what a roar on the denk of the rock! when will the benefit askew? if I only had a helper to hold that heart-will." In truth the blood beat, beat into his brain like the thud of a hydraulic ram, but he looked at his hand, and was surprised to see that he could not lift it. Then it occurred to him to try to wink, and just as the eyelids moved he stumbled and fell sidewise through the red curtain that screened a confessional box near the door of the little church, — all untenanted as yet, but open for early mass an hour to come, for the sexton had saved himself another journey by turning the key on his way home from the fire.

As he fell, his head rolled to one side, and he caught the faint flickering of a tiny red light in the glass bowl of a lamp hanging

above the tawdry little altar of white paint and pseudo gold. It was the eye of God! would it jump out of its socket and chase him? If so, perhaps that man would stop it; but no, he couldn't, for he was nailed hand and foot to a post. He himself must run away. He was sure he could think clearer than ever, if only words would come; but somehow his brain and his body alike refused to obey the real him. Green roaring, that was all; but then came a whirl of far music and plenty of pictures, one after another, or another in one; and he could walk into each picture without getting up from the floor, — that was a comfort. He stood in the Lenox churchyard on the hill, with Death's serene outlook across the valleys; he looked seaward from Green Mountain over the isles, and up through hill-girt Lake George; he sniffed the odors of a hayfield, and there came back to him his first reading of *The Earthly Paradise* in the sunny July afternoons of a college vacation; he peered into the pool near the Flume House, and saw the water tumbling down to Niagara Falls, more majestic than the falls themselves; he walked on the top of the Natural Bridge at twilight and tried to hear the brook that rushed through the gorge below; a dirty squirrel in Capitol park at Richmond hopped

into his hand for a nut; a thunderstorm crashed anew over Lake Champlain, while a night-hawk screamed; there rose before his gaze the White Hills in winter, sixty miles away; waked by the trombones, he walked with the Moravians up to the hillside graves in the Pennsylvania Nazareth for the Easter-morning service; in the plain square church of the Irvingites in West-sixteenth street he heard one speak with tongues, and he understood it all, and knew that it meant that the secret of life was the inwhirl, provided only that he clutch the ice-clad chains of the Battery and row across Sachacha pond in viewless fog. Last of all —

When Father Conaty came to the church for early mass he found Morland's body on the floor, hat on head, and eyes — as the good father explained to his flock in his first sermon after the service of purification of the building — firmly fixed on the red wound in the side of the great plaster figure on the crucifix.

“Died of heart disease, didn't he, doctor?” said the sidewalk committee to Doctor Urquhart, who had been quickly sent for; but somehow the gossips were unable satisfactorily to quote just what that gentleman said in reply, before he gave his testimony to a representative of the law.

The very next day, however, the world knew all about the events of that night of Bellwood nights; for was it not able to read the following despatch:—

BELLWOOD, March 25.

A serious fire in this town, last night, was caused by the slackening of lime in the basement of Higgins & Co.'s store, due to the rapid rise of the river in the spring freshet. Three stores and the old Congregational meeting-house were destroyed. One man died of heart-failure on account of over-exertion, and his body was found early in the morning in the confessional box of St. Bridget's Roman Catholic church, whither, it is thought, he had gone in hopes of absolution at early mass-time. From papers in his pocket it is supposed his name was Henry Morlon, a type-setter of Harborside.

When Robert Rodney read the item at bachelor breakfast in his handsome studio he exclaimed: "By Jove, what a subject for a picture, and in my own town, too! Wonder who the poor chap was? Too bad the old church went; must have caught from sparks. Don't say whether one of the three stores was Welby's, but guess it must have been, so near to Higgins's. Must write to Amoret and find out."

X.

HIPPOCRATES.

WEARY were the days that followed Bellwood's baptism of water and of fire. The world seemed to close round Amoret, and its major and minor miseries were harder to bear, week by week, than the greater woes she had endured. It is easy to be heroic once for all; but afterward?

Friends were kind, and the hospitality of Squire Bennett's house was freely extended for an indefinite period, but of course some new home had to be sought as soon as Mr. Welby's convalescence had fairly begun. Nothing seemed left to do save to go to Mrs. Eggstone's boarding-house, a step as unwelcome to Amoret as to her grandfather, for both had loved the privacy of their own queer home, nor had conceived the possibility of any other standing-place for life in Bellwood. Mrs. Eggstone did not mean to be unkindly, but she was precise and provincial in her notions of life, which were for the most part

rather petty. The inveterate experiences of forty years had made economy so integral a part of her constitution that she saved by mechanism and spent by moral struggle.

Amoret's own new life of care for her grandfather, in the extended vacation from school duties which she perforce was taking, was so busy as to leave little time for elaborate or methodical exercises in melancholy, but there was with her an ever-present sense of the wrongness of things, which became the dull undertone of all the music left in life. It haunted her half-conscious sleep, and awaited her like a pale ghost in the early dawn, a thought that could be neither banished nor eluded. If, for an instant, on waking she queried, "What is it?" at once came the woe-begone "Ah, yes!" to mind. It was like a perpetual exaggeration of the gloomy feeling that overhangs one sojourning in the strong sea-air and monotonous moors of a treeless, sandy island,—as though he had committed some sin, or evil were impending. Once before had Amoret endured the merest slight forerunner of this discipline of prevalent heart-broken misery: when, in her early girlhood, a long August drought had overhung the Bellwood hills with dry stifling smoke, and the sun had risen and set like an old copper pot, and

the ministers, Sunday by Sunday, wrestled with Providence in prayer for rain, and people's faces looked sallow when they met. But then there was at least no fault of her own. Now, the spring sunshine smiled more sweetly day by day; Miss Tetley, though plainly failing, wrote the kindest of little notes in a pathetically wavering hand, to tell her "poor little girl" how well school affairs were going in her absence, but how much all sympathized with her and longed for her return; in various ways, too, of deftness or clumsiness, the villagers opened to her their cordial hearts and willing hands; while Mr. Welby, with a more patient smile on his thin face and a gentle touch from his white hands, was as good as anybody could be expected to be who had lost his living, his little stock of physical activity, and the roof-tree which had come to seem to him his one tent of pilgrimage through the world.

Between Amoret's case and her grandfather's, however, there was an all-severing difference. Mr. Welby now felt, more keenly than ever before in his life, that there surely existed some close partnership of common sense and immutable justice between his own perceptions and those of the Great Unknown. Such a sense is a comfort, whether you are trying to be good-natured and to make little trouble in a

boarding-house rocking-chair, or are wrestling with principalities and powers. Holding Nicene, Athanasian, Augsburg, Savoy, or Trent platforms to be either lastingly mischievous or temporarily serviceable, Mr. Welby still clung with the intensity of a Moses to the three certitudes, as he called them, — a Father's might, man's eternity, the oneness of justice. If for the name of the great divinity he cared little, of his long, inexorable exactness he had the profoundest sense. And now It — Fate, Destiny, Law, Providence, what you will — had not only allowed Henry Morland freely to go to his own place, but had so arranged his exit that Amoret had perforce seen in the clearest light all of that blackness and sad conscienceless negation which Mr. Welby was now sure he himself had foreknown with unerring divination. Amoret alone, poor gentle child, had been deceived; Mr. Welby, the Philosophy of Life, and the ethical regulation of the universe were vindicated beyond question. The author of the Philosophy, thus borne up by an I-told-you-so of the greatest firmness, was accordingly sustained in his trials by a comfortable and righteous egotism of such power and radiance that it naturally and sincerely assumed the guise of the gentlest patience and most affectionate thoughtfulness,

— certainly a result worth reaching, and one that made Amoret's devotion to the old man more willing and reverential than ever.

But poor Amoret's world was for the time shattered, not vindicated. A dull pain was the environment of her monotony of routine, and everything she saw, or thought, or read seemed to tend toward one grim end. Once she picked up a shabby old copy of "The Bride's Tragedy," and her eyes fell on the words, "Beware of thine own soul. 'T is but one devil ever tempts a man, and his name's *Self*."

When read, they haunted her; reason assured her that she had been blameless, that the lines were Morland's biography, not hers; but yet, had it not been for her, Morland might be alive. She had brought death's blight upon this very valley these soon-to-be verdant and fragrant hillsides. Of death itself, from her childish days, she had never felt the slightest fear. But the shadow of destruction which had now fallen on her life was not the one she used to think so beautiful in the old, old days — how far away they seemed — when she played among the gravestones. Not only was Morland dead in the body, — that, after all, was not so much, — but she had laid in the grave of sheeted memories the soul Morland, which she had herself, it now appeared,

summoned from nothingness and given a life but fleeting and visionary. Mortality of the ordinary sort was tenfold more durable than this death of a ghost; and she devoutly wished she had never met him or created him at all. Weak and worn by fitful experience, notwithstanding her invariable appearance of outward calm, in the depths of her heart she felt a distrust, and despite of herself. She had always assumed a sort of moral responsibility for the choice and even the individual character of her associates, whom she felt to be partly of her own moulding, as certainly they were indexes of her tastes and capacities. And now her chief friend of all, the one she had most ideally and unreservedly admired, had proved to be a will-o'-the-wisp,—nay, worse, a nothing, a shade, and a shade of infernal blackness. She herself must be either a sinner or a fool.

Again, from the worldly point of view, what had been her success in that life to which she had been born? She had fancied herself, at least in a negative way, a harmless friend of woods and waves, of birds and flowers; a pleasant-meaning, if naturally aloof, liver among men and women and children, who surely intended no harm to anybody, but the rather sighed for the ultimate good. How about the results? Aside from her grand-

father, who was mentor and not follower, and her scholars down in Harborside, circumstances had thrown her into peculiar and, as she had hoped, mutually helpful association with two men. One of these she had sent back to his city home a frankly sybaritic and perpetual boy, of whom nothing better could be said,—to judge from his infrequent letters,—than that, in all save the unquestionably pleasing pictures which he painted, he was a case of arrested development, perhaps not positively mischievous to himself or others. The other she had driven straight to miserable suicide, in this very town, on this very street, just three buildings away from her present abode. Nobody else in Bellwood, she reflected, had ever been obliged to confess this much since old Fitzpatrick, who used to kick his wife when he came home drunk, found her hanging dead from a beam in the empty woodshed. The end crowns the work!

It could not be said that Amoret's innermost spark of trust in life's good quite went out, even in those dark days. She knew that love must outlast all else, and that love meant loyalty to the spirit of things true. That Morland, under disguises hardly specious, had been faithless and utterly false to that spirit, she could not doubt; indeed, she had half

feared as much in some moments of dreariness before the final crash. Loves go, let love remain; if half-gods or no-gods depart, we may hope the true god will sometime appear. It was this deep inner sense, and this alone, that gave her strength to nurse Mr. Welby through long days and dark nights, or to be patient when she tried to find her appetite tempted by Mrs. Eggstone's frugally fried rump steak or problematic coffee. There used occasionally to come to her, in childhood's sleep, a dream-face of one summing up all of beautiful ever known; and still, in her present shabby woes, she was loyal to some such far ideal; but meanwhile the pity of it all! A sweet soul sometimes feels as much debased by involuntary association with evil as by the acceptance thereof; and Amoret, for all her inner purity, bore a grudge against Fate for besmirching her fair horizon with blood. At best, her life could never be rid of one great blighting memory: she had been unwillingly and innocently forced by some power outside herself to be the last link in the chain that dragged a man to his death. As she looked back upon the series of events she could see no single point for severe blame of self, but the whole had somehow proved greater than the sum of all its

parts, and the very town seemed withered and blackened because she had lived in it.

But money must be earned, that was certain; all the more because Mr. Welby's poor dwindling little business was now, of course, utterly gone, and there was only the meagre insurance to take its place. So, with the promise of a visit every Sunday, Amoret went back to her Harborside school. Some facts and more fancies with reference to the death of Morland,—who had been for years a well-known Harbor-side figure,—had run through the city, and Amoret's name had been so connected with his as to stimulate conjectural gossip, but without personal blame of herself, thanks to the uncommon circumstance that Mr. Welby, Morland, and Amoret had all been persons who knew how to hold their tongues, and had never been in the habit of volunteering unsolicited defences against self-constituted critics. The girls of the school were fascinated by the slight glamour of mysterious romance that now hung about the shapely head whose outside and inside they had always rapturously admired. Now they all were sure that there must be some great hidden sorrow behind those dark brown eyes; and for once they were right. Therefore Amoret's toils of teaching were easier than ever, save that at times,

when she asked a girl to distinguish between a metaphor and a simile, she found it hard to startle the staring-eyed damsel from a far away reverie of which she herself was the subject. Her recitations in English literature, too, came to have a semi-religious character in the eyes of her pupils, who were sure there was some deep inner meaning when she quoted, "An honest man's the noblest work of God."

In Miss Tetley's treatment of her there was a new gentleness and delicacy of sympathy, shown not only in the old school teacher's willingness to let details of instruction go their own way, or rather in Amoret's way,—for Miss Tetley now sat up only on pleasant afternoons,—but also in the fact that she saw to it that there was more sunshine in the rooms and less dankness and weeds in the ancient flower garden inclosed by the classic fence. Then, likewise, it was pleasant that Amoret's wage was increased, for the school was so prosperous that intending pupils were obliged to wait their turn; and thus the weekly stipend taken home to Bellwood seemed to Mr. Welby preposterously large. He, himself, without Amoret's knowledge, religiously put all of it into the savings-bank in her name, meanwhile subsisting frugally on the insurance-money. "Maybe I shall die before that is all gone,"

he said to himself, in cheerful financial forecast.

Amoret's Sundays in Bellwood, as her summer term wore away and the long vacation approached, brought her two comforts, aside from the physical rest and change. One was the new pleasure she took in talking with Mr. Welby himself. Now that, for the first time in her life, she had learned bitter lessons in the school of woe, she appreciated more than ever the simplicity of his character, and came to take an actual rather than an obligatory satisfaction in his sayings in the Philosophy of Life, which was now his daily companion and chief vital function. It was worth something, she thought, to sit on the doorstep of the boarding-house, some warm, sunshiny, fragrant Sunday in May, and hear him read, with impressive voice and modest twinkle of gray eyes and utter oblivion to a seeming assumption now and then: —

The riddle of existence is solved only by self-development Godward through endless years.

The undertone of the Eternal is drowned by the whirring wheels of the petty.

I am Sin and Sainthood.

A man will forgive you for killing him, but not for laying your little finger on his egotism.

Nevertheless, I am glad I learned to read.

The gentleman does not speak of money or the lack of it.

Quit talk about three things: numbers, doctrine, and misunderstanding.

It takes intellect to appreciate the beauty of indecent books.

Rome deified men and brutalized gods.

The library is a church, its alcoves shrines.

Philology is to literature as brick-measuring to architecture.

Heterogeneous enough, surely, and not always, perhaps, any newer or truer than most attempts to pack wide knowledge into little nuts; but Amoret, somehow, found them increasingly helpful. That one about self-development and the endless years—oh, if the thought was not true nothing was true, nothing left to live by; but with it to-day was divine. At any rate, she must be all she could to all she could, just as the dear, gentle old man was with his courtly compliments to Mrs. Eggstone on the appearance of an occasionally edible potato or unexpectedly delicate griddle-cake, and all his endeavors to make his poor, wee world just a little more comfortable for his living in it one day more.

“Put this in your book, grandpa,” said Amoret, as she kissed his thin cheek one Monday morning just before train-time: “‘Only

the gentleman and the gentlewoman can be ill gracefully."

Her other Bellwood comfort, though a minor one, was in its way rather pleasant: the helpfulness of Dr. Urquhart. The doctor is the modern priest, who confesses a man and shrives him and prescribes penance as he will, meanwhile getting his bread from the uncertain alms of the laity. John Urquhart was a doctor from the third and fourth generation. Father, grandfather, and greatgrandfather had dispensed pills, potions, and common-sense from gigs or saddle-bags, and it seemed as natural for their descendant to follow the ancestral line as for a Brahmin to continue in his caste.

Once when "young doctor John," as his relatives had to call him for distinction's sake, was vaccinating Mrs. Eggstone's scared child, and it was all over before the tearful little girl thought he had begun, she said in delight: "Why, that was only a scratch." "Oh yes," said the smiling practitioner, "I'm a scratcher by profession. First I had to scratch for a bit of money when I taught day-school up in the Wyoming valley or singing-school way over in Nantucket, and now, you see, I have to scratch for a living."

Just then Mr. Welby chanced to walk into the sitting-room, and, picking up the little girl,

now smiling through her tears, sat down on the hair-cloth sofa, taking pains as he did so to cover with his person the worn rip, on general principles of benignity to the world at large.

"I did n't know you ever were in Nantucket, doctor," said he, administering a peppermint to the child, who was delightedly pointing to a minute drop of blood on her arm. "You don't ever say much about your past," he added, tentatively.

The doctor laughed a happy little laugh, and retorted: "Medical men have enough to do in taking care of the present. I always thought there was a good deal of sense in the head of the old fellow who remarked, 'Where I am, there I be.' But speaking of Nantucket, it's all put away in my memory. Nothing is quite so clear in our recollections as the times when we have the least money, and are trying to make a specialty of things in general."

"Nobody has much money on those frequent wind-swept moors, does he?" said Mr. Welby.

"Not unless it's the summer boarders," said the doctor. "The native jacks-of-all-trades have to sweep the Grand Banks and the sand banks for what they get to live on, now that whale-fishing's gone."

"I was there for two or three days when I

was a lad, bluefishing," said Mr. Welby; " and I was struck with the pathetic, worn faces of the women."

" More than here? " said the doctor.

" Perhaps so," said Mr. Welby, " because in the sea air they get skinnier and bonier than our inland mistresses of piecrust and frying-pan."

" Well," said the doctor, " there is certainly an added pathos in sea-women's lives of which we of the inland country know nothing — they have so little but monotonous drudgery or swift tragedy. Up here among the hills, for that matter, all romance seems driven out of womanhood save its stock of Christian names; when some farmer's wife dies, worn out at forty-two, you find Ormacinda, or Theda, or Zula, or something like that, on the plated plate of her stained pine coffin."

" Is n't it queer that all fisher folk seem to have an unlimited stock of time and patience? Nobody dreams of having anything to do to-day; everything is to be done the week after next."

" Why is it, do you suppose, that those who have the hardest work to do in the world are often the softest in manner? I remember going once to a Nantucket prayer-meeting in a school-house seven miles from town, snuggled beneath a dreary little suggestion of

a hill. One of the roughest of old tars was called on to pray. I could only think of him as bellowing oaths with the roar of a foghorn, but he knelt down and addressed the Lord with the voice of a sucking dove."

"Perhaps his courage was taken out of him by the stormy vicissitudes of his life."

"Oh, no, Mr. Welby, not that; nobody in this world is good for anything until he has had a hard time; but your man who has been through danger knows when to be humble."

Nobody in this world is good for anything until he has had a hard time? then I ought to be good for something, for my time has been hard enough, thought Amoret, who had come in and said a pleasant good morning, and sat silent in the other corner of the room. When your statue of Faith has been rudely knocked from its pedestal, and you are trying to readjust your moral universe, all black and malign, you would rather listen than chatter; and that was Amoret's mood nowadays.

"Well, doctor," said the old man, as he walked to the door with his friend, "I was humble enough when first I drove through one of those moor holes on that island. Why, it was hemmed in with inextricable swampy growth on both sides, and looked like a blood-red pool fathoms deep; I never shall forget

it." Mr. Welby's experiences as a traveller were both limited and ancient.

"Quite an allegory of life," said the doctor, as he nodded his head in cheery good-bye to Amoret, and told the little girl not to touch the sore spot if her arm began to ache or itch a little. "Blood and flood and fire are n't so awful when you've driven through them, after all. Well, sir, you are getting along so finely that you might as well turn me adrift."

"Not quite yet, doctor," said the old man, who disliked the thought of losing the ozone of his society. "Come once or twice more just to see that I don't have a relapse; I go out walking twice a day now, you know, and I might catch cold." But the doctor was already putting his hitch-weight into his nondescript two-wheeled vehicle; meanwhile the white horse whinnied appreciatively, and got three little pats in return.

"Just who is Doctor Urquhart, grandpa?" queried Amoret. "All I ever knew about him, before he began to come to see you, was that he has lived here two or three years, is always good-natured and never in a hurry, and is going to marry Miss Bennett."

"Is he?" said Mr. Welby; "that's too bad; she is n't quite up to him, though a little money at home is convenient for a doctor.

Yes, I remember now, I did hear of that engagement a while ago; too bad, too bad."

"Don't worry about it, grandpa; you are n't responsible for all the folks in the world," said Amoret, with a slight feeling on her own part that the match between Gertrude Bennett and the doctor would be hardly "appropriate," as the world puts it. "Gertrude is bright and pretty, and was ever so good to us when we were at the house."

"Oh, I know it," said he; "that's all very well, but marriage is too great a risk to venture; don't ever get married, child."

"I never shall," said Amoret, simply.

"So much the better," said Mr. Welby.

"Do you suppose," said Amoret, "the doctor meant to minister to a mind diseased when he said that about driving through blood and flood and fire? That's just what you and I have been doing."

"Not a bit, not a bit, not at all, of course not," said Mr. Welby with alacrity, and an earnest desire to change the subject as soon as possible. He was getting so strong now that he was resuming his old function of guardian of a little girl who must be shielded from things by superior masculine discretion. "That's just his talk; sometimes he has an idea, a pretty good one too."

"I'm glad he has ideas sometimes," said Amoret, with a tiny little laugh, her first since it happened. He heard it and was delighted; while she went on: "That's more than some people do in their life-time."

"Well, little miss," said the philosopher, "you asked who he was; now just come over here and I'll tell you about him. Let me see, how much I know. Urquhart, John, M. D.—you remember Leigh Hunt said the height of his ambition was to see his name printed in reverse order—was born somewhere down in Virginia, or was it South Carolina? His father must have been a country doctor of the old school, with a rambling practice and maybe a poor farm that his children—and I suppose there were plenty of them—had to take care of as best they could. John very likely made up his mind he'd have a better education than his father, so he and his brother went to some academy near by, boarded themselves, and picked up what ninepences they could earn until first one and then the other got through."

"By the orthodox exit, or prematurely?" said Amoret, absent-mindedly.

"Oh, they graduated all right, though I don't believe they had more than one black suit between them. But they couldn't have

been in the same class ; so the elder could pass it along, like his text-books and his stock of experience, to the other. Then they wandered north, and taught 'deestrick' school winters, and banged their tuning-forks in singing-schools, and so one contrived to make himself a minister or a lawyer and John a doctor ; for when he got through school he must have started for the city medical colleges and fought his way through one or two of them in the same style. Oh, why didn't my father *make* me go to college ! " said Mr. Welby, in abrupt personal application of his supposititious life and times of Urquhart.

" You know more than most college professors, if you don't know much about Dr. Urquhart," said his affectionate descendant.

" More than some, perhaps," was the discreet reply of the author of the *Philosophy of Life*, " but not as much as I ought to. And one thing is sure, I don't know as much medicine as John Urquhart, or as much about farming, nor do I have as much practical horse-sense."

" What has farming to do with 'doctoring,' as Mrs. Eggstone calls it? I can see the connection between horse-sense and veterinary surgery," said Amoret, who was just weary enough to want to hear her grandfather talk,

without being particular what the subject was; Dr. Urquhart would answer as well as anything; and it was a pleasure to see Mr. Welby's restored animation.

"A good deal, my dear. Good food and good health are the foci of the ellipse of life," said he, wondering whether the observation were worth putting into shape for the book. "You see the doctor spent so much time clearing up pastures, and mowing, and hoeing corn, and digging potatoes, and so on, that he never goes by a dilapidated farm without wishing he could set it right. If he had his way he'd run a subsoil drain there, lay a stone wall here, make Jones put his cart under cover and clear up the rotting lumber around his back door for the kitchen stove, and tell Smith the black pool in his barnyard is enough to give all the children sore throats."

"What was that story Gertrude told me about his digging graves for a couple of children with his own hands?" said Amoret, ignoring her ancestor's somewhat fanciful descriptions of southern agriculture.

"Why, that was all there was to tell. A couple of Phin Rogers's children, just across the river, died of scarlet fever, in spite of all the doctor could do, and so he buried them himself and said the Lord's prayer and the

‘Suffer little children’ text over their poor scraps of bodies as he filled the short graves. Everybody else was afraid to go near them. And the worst of it is that such cases are the very ones that never pay anything. Somebody was saying the other day, in our beautiful down-east dialect, that ‘Urquhart’d got quite er practice, but ‘t want good fer nothin.’”

“Yes, he seems to be gentleness itself.”

“Not so very gentle, they say, when he turned a brute of a husband out of his own wife’s bed-room, and told him he’d throw him down stairs if he came back into the house before the crisis was passed.”

“Doctors must have a pretty good chance to see what a failure marriage is,” said Amoret, with the positiveness of pessimism.

“I suppose so,” said Mr. Welby, “but Dr. Urquhart, they say, is sometimes a belated matchmaker himself, and sends for the minister or the justice, while he stays with the groom, just to see that the future happy husband don’t chance to be absent when the ceremony ought to begin”— and he gave a little interior laugh. “Another of his great hobbies is that poor folks ought to be more careful about saving meat-scaps and making good wholesome soups; and then he’s made the town authorities put in two or three new watering-troughs on the

long hill roads over west," said Mr. Welby, who found his garrulity and his subject simultaneously and indefinitely increase in extent.

Amoret looked at her watch; it was Monday morning, and getting near train-time. "He must be a busy man," said she, as her grandfather's pause made it seem necessary to make some audible sound.

"Not so busy but what he went into the grammar-school twice a week, all last fall, to teach them singing; he showed me a gold pen the youngsters gave him as a present when he got through. And then he takes a good deal of interest in the library, especially in ——"

"Do you know where my little one-volume Shakespeare is, grandpa? I want to take it back with me."

"Yes, over on that corner-table; I had it yesterday. Do you know, Amoret child, I believe the all-round man does more good in the world than your modern specialist!"

"Whom do you mean," said she, "Shakespeare or Dr. Urquhart?"

"Both of them," said the philosopher, almost fiercely.

"Now be a good boy until next Saturday night, and don't walk enough to get tired, or let any caller stay long enough to weary you out. Good-bye," and she gave him a kiss just

like those she used to leave behind her when she went to play in the graveyard: long enough to be sweet and short enough to sharpen its memory.

"Good-bye, child," said he at the door. As Amoret waved her supplementary farewell from the sidewalk gate the old man stood on the porch a moment and looked up toward the sunlight that bathed his bald head and smooth face in a grateful warmth. "Pleasant weather nowadays," he soliloquized. "I'm glad Amoret is getting a little more cheerful; I chatter away about anything, so long as I can take her mind off herself."

As the train clattered southward past the huge ice-houses, all filled to their roofs with the garnered store of winter's harvest, Amoret's thought recurred for a minute to the morning's visit and following talk: "How strange it is we know so little about people in our own small bailiwicks! I've known Dr. Urquhart by sight, and to speak to, for two or three years, but I never really *knew* anything about him. I'm not sure but his way of life is the best one, whatever happens; if this world is all, it surely is; if there's to be a series of worlds for us, why, it's a good start. There are plenty of mysteries in this universe, but there are one or two certainties.

Anyway, he's done grandpa a world of good — more by his coming, I believe, than by his liniments, and porous plasters, and tonics. Is n't it good that granddad is so well? I really don't see but that Richard is actually himself again!"

"What's the name of the next station?" said an old woman on the seat in front, with that abrupt sense of proprietorship which characterizes the rural traveller.

"Saxony," said Amoret.

XI.

ONE OR TWO.

July 12. This is my twenty-first birthday — anniversary, the purists would have us say — and in my old age I, Amoret Wenton, spinster, nevertheless being of sound mind, am going to begin to keep a journal. Not a diary, for I care not whether my entries be daily, or quarterly, or decennial, a hundred pages or a single line. I must be placidly good to dear grandpa, and ought to be to my scholars, when next term begins and I go back to Harborside as "first assistant to the principal in charge." Poor cousin Lodema, I fear me, will never be well again, and surely I ought to hold up her hands as Aaron held up Hur's, — or was it Moses that held up Aaron's? At any rate, my function seems to be that of general helper in two little corners of this weary and wicked world. Ever since that awful night last spring, I have sometimes felt so dreary and hateful that I want to have some place wherein to put my wicked self, so that it

shan't trouble anybody else. When my great-grandmother became engaged — fifteen years old, poor little thing — she went out into the garden, dug a deep hole under a cherry tree, and buried her dolls. I shall never be *engaged* — what a hateful word — but I've buried my dolls all the same. There are three Amoretts: first, the outside one, who "bears up" so wonderfully, the kind world says; then the other one whose heart has ached so, ever since her dream died; and last and least the inner speck or spark that knows the great plan will somehow and somewhere come true and sweet in the mysterious event. Perhaps this book, therefore, will be more trinitarian than unitarian, but I mean to make it my tell-tale, for I cannot weight dear grandpa or poor cousin with my burden of woes, and I have n't another friend in the wide world. I sometimes think I don't really and inly love even them, though cousin Lodema is so good to me, and what could I do without grandpa?

July 13. — Here is my second day, and I make an entry, not as in duty bound, but as I chance to wish. Dear me; this book must never be seen by a living soul, or a dead one either! just look at what I wrote yesterday. Two note-books are too many for one house; but grandpa's is of blessing, mine of bane, or

at least a sort of scapegoat. Poor goat! what a pathetic picture of Holman Hunt's; why should one thing suffer for another? But I have suffered, and I do, and was I to blame? Perhaps I am going to develop a New England conscience of the "Am I his, or am I not," order. "Nobody asked you, sir, she said." Humor is grimly severe, and severity is grimly humorous.

July 20.—I have a mind to copy some of my poor old poems in this book; perhaps that would reduce the weight of the burden of past sin I must carry. I can make believe this is publication: they will never get a chance of issue in any other way. Here is one I wrote ever so long ago:—

AT SUNSET.

Adown the burning west the splendor goes,
Its glories brightening as they fade and die,
And in the lessening light each cloudlet glows
In rosy red against the violet sky.

For see, the happy day is near to death,
The lowlier hills have faded from our sight,
And in the leaves there stirs the chilling breath
Of death's twin sister, icy-throated night.

Our love, dear heart, its dewy dawntide had,
And then it waxed unto its perfect noon;
Alas! shall love grow sad that now is glad,
And vanish? for death's twilight cometh soon.

Not so ; the sun that dies beneath the west
 To-morrow's east shall newly glorify,
 And death itself in death's own tomb shall rest,
 An episode in love's eternity !

Well, that is what love ought to be, I know. Has any one ever proved it? Very like,—surely; but not I. How easy it is to preach to others and then be a castaway. Yet I know the spark is a possible fire and that it still glows far under the dismal waste of many a life.

Here is No. 2. I wrote it before I ever had a trouble in the world, or lost a friend, excepting poor father and mother, that I never knew. That is the way most poems are written, I suppose,—make-believe love and fanciful bereavement :—

AFTER.

Beneath the trees that shade the lonely river
 The ancient house is standing as before,
 Across the porch the wonted shadows quiver,
 And still the bluebells blossom by the door.

I see a nameless Something lying whitely
 Behind the swaying curtains of her room ;
 Across the breast the hands are folded tightly,
 And in their icy clutch two roses bloom.

Alike to her to-day are joy and sadness ;
 Why do I weep? the shut eyes cannot see,
 Her ears are deaf to sounds of woe or gladness,
 And those mute lips shall never speak to me.

But still beside the dark and lonely river
The ancient house is standing as before,
Across the porch the wonted shadows quiver,
And still the bluebells blossom by the door.

Very well, then, I suppose they do. Now that might be printed in a country newspaper, and somebody might cut it out and paste it in a scrapbook, with a tear-fall somewhere on the dingy type. That is n't the worst death, though.

July 23.—I think, after all, I will put an end to two things in this book, and not spoil any more pages with them. One is pessimism, for if there be one thing in the world I utterly loathe it is that. All tends to good, and if I am a part of all I also must, and all my woebegone sufferings. Out with you, forever; though I'm glad of you, for I love Love better because I've seen its hideous opposite. I do hope, though, that I can get rid of things by simply saying "out with you," or "aroint thee, witch," on paper.

The other beginning that shall have swift ending is the putting of poetry, or rather verse-scribbling, into these innocent pages. I will sin just once more, however, and copy this new thing I have been writing the last day or two. It's wrong, somehow, but I can't correct it, so if I keep it here maybe I can better it by and by. The idea is all right, but

the execution lacks, wherein it adequately represents the poor poet that produced it:

ONCE ON A TIME.

Once on a time a palace stood
 In the midst of a paradise ;
 Dull folks called it a house in a wood,
 But they must have been blind in their eyes,
 For I who was born in it very well knew
 That its roof had a golden glow —
 “Oh, tell me where was that palace fair ! ”
 My child, it was long ago.

Once on a time the westward hills
 Were mountains, every one,
 And just beyond were islands and seas
 Aflame in the setting sun ;
 And up in the air were splendid steeds
 All galloping to and fro —
 “Oh, tell me true what they used to do ! ”
 My child, it was long ago,

Once on a time the girls and boys
 Were as wise as men to-day,
 And they used to see such wonderful things
 By the brooks that have run away ;
 Golden fishes in emerald pools,
 And diamonds over the snow —
 “Oh, tell me when they will come again ! ”
 My child, it was long ago.

Once on a time, the whole year long,
 The stars and the moon and the sun
 Had nothing to do but to wake me up
 And to tell when day was done ;

But now they shine in a different way
On graves that are long and low —
“Oh, tell me why there’s a tear in your eye?”
My child, it was long ago.

That is meant to be an idealization of the dear old bookshop, or of anybody’s childhood home; which intention I record here lest sometime I come on the scrap and wonder what it all is about. This is a picture of a horse. Protean Amoret! a confident lover, a stricken mourner for a dead girl, a reminiscential octogenarian.

July 28. — The doctor and Gertrude Bennett are not engaged, after all, and never have thought of such a thing, — for what in the world do I put that into my journal? My pen writes like planchette this morning, and reproduces the last outside influence. Well, let the words stand: I would be ashamed to take enough interest in them to cut out the leaf. One marriage less in the world, for the time being. Let them wait; reflection saves many a mistake, and I respected the gay Gertrude and the apathetic doctor too much to want them to make any mistakes in so awful a thing. What a gossipy town this is! Why don’t they gossip about me? perhaps they do. By the way, Gertrude Bennett is far the loveliest girl in Bellwood; her swift moods are

cloaks, as airy as gossamer, for a light and radiant nature; she might captivate anybody, unless he were a philosopher like me or a steadily amiable drudge like the doctor. There is something stolid in steadiness; I dislike people whose photographs always are good, and have an expression as invariable as a haystack or the side of a house. Whom are you talking about? the doctor? Suppose, my dear Amoret, you begin by being stolidly or stupidly good yourself, for a year or two, and then throw stones through your neighbors' conservatory windows. Speaking of the doctor, what a lovable dog he has; just a common mongrel smuzzly cur; that is the kind that knows the most and has the biggest heart. We had such a good time in the garden the other day, when the doctor was making his final call on grandpa. I know he understood me before we shook hands; and full anticipatory sympathy is the truest mark of soul. If that dog has no soul I have none. I wonder if he beneficently influences the doctor, or the doctor him. His name, it seems, is Don Quixote. I don't see how he finds time to read. My *he's* are as mixed as in a school-girl's theme. Don Quixote doesn't need to read; he apprehends.

August 3.—I believe I am slowly getting

to see a little of the joy of just using the minute right, whether it be foggy or sunshiny. And I hardly dare write it, lest it sound like vainglory or temerity, but I half rejoice over this duty of struggling and casting off. Life is the braver and brighter for death, and now I have seen death I live the more, just as I used to play in the graveyard on effigies of skulls and crossbones and chubby angels. Deaths and marriages ought to be beginnings, not endings, and now-a-days I feel as though I had been married, sometime, to the idea of present duty, and I mean to make it lovely and happy if I can. Why, even the old mediævals used to see that love, for anybody or anything, was a passion that went out rather than in; an enthusiasm that blessed and ennobled the lover — a "a habit of joy," somebody has called it; what a good term! "Love that withdraws my thoughts from all vile things," says the *Vita Nuova*.

August 4. — I would rather find a model than hunt up a critic, and I would rather be a model than find one. I wonder if I ever shall? Who are my models? Jesus is one, grandpa is another, and sometimes I imitate even plain Doctor Urquhart in his good-natured jog-trot of cheery helpfulness. Plenty of people do that, I suppose; but I never met many of

them. Your model is generally annoyingly virtuous, but these three are n't. Friends are better than lovers, anyway. I think Christ and I would get along nicely together if we ever met; he would understand things, and would not weary you with explanations. The blessing of a private journal is that you can be as egotistic and irreverent as you wish.

August 8.—We are always begging for more strength, instead of using what we have. Now and here is good enough chance for anybody. If only we would do and be without forever prating or thinking about it. Why, look at that poor little tumbler full of forget-me-nots I picked the other day; some of them have grown half an inch since they were torn from their home. A month hence I shall be so busy that I shall have no time to be philosophical; that will be one good thing.

August 12.—I have been out of doors with grandpa nearly all the time the last few days; he seems perfectly well, but pines for something to do. I hardly see what is the next move.

August 13.—Cousin Lodema was found dead in her bed this morning, and I must go to Harborside at once; shall ask grandpa to go too.

August 14.—There is nothing to do, the

housekeeper is competent; the undertaker in a city attends to all the external details; only the burial to-morrow from the old stone church. She lies so peaceful and sleepful in her cedar coffin; they say she apparently died without a motion. She has been ripening and richening ever since I have known her,—not so hard and prim as they say she used to be. Now if I could only keep her school together as her memorial; but if scholars fall off I never could pay the rent of this big house. Indeed, I have no right to decide anything, only I wish I could show I mourn her by doing what she liked. Somehow, though, I am not sorrowful or stricken. She deserved a good rest, but I cannot pray she have rest eternal, for such as she would never endure it. Let light perpetual shine upon her, Lord! After the burial I am going to help the housekeeper set cousin's little belongings to rights.

August 15.—A Christian burial; that's all, and that's enough: flowers, and some tears from dozens of her girls, young and old, and good cheer of upward and onward hope from the old minister. I would just as soon die myself, if I could die that way, when my time comes. She never made too much trouble about anything, precise as she used to be; and so she died as she would have wished.

For me, I would prefer to dissipate into space when my time came; but such a burial as hers, all the way from the solemn granite church out to that sweet sunny bank by the ocean inset, is the next best thing. And her legacy is like what grandpa's will be: a thousand memories of modest faithfulness.

August 17.—To-day came a lawyer, for the reading of the will; never thought of such a thing, or supposed she would think it worth while to make one; but it was like a bit of an old English novel. She owned this place, it seems, and the lawyer says she was a rather rich woman besides. I am her sole heir, and may carry on the school or not as I choose. Of course I shall; I hate money save as something to give away. But grandpa is now a rich man; that is, rich for Bellwood. Who ever dreamed it?

August 20.—“Estimated value of real property, \$25,000; personal property, \$36,294.17; total, \$61,294.17.” That ever this poor journal should become a ledger! I *will* go on with the school, and I have a new teacher already in mind; that will be six in all, if the school continues to prosper. *Annus mirabilis*; so many things have happened since December 31 became January 1.

August 23.—Somehow I cannot sleep lately;

I lie awake and think and think, that is all, and do not care to eat. What of it? but grandpa somehow found it out, and got frightened, and sent up home for Dr. Urquhart without my knowledge. The funny part of it was that Don Quixote came too. He had never seen his master get on a railroad train, and so jumped aboard too late to be put off. I believe his fuzzy, honest little face did me as much good as his master's. The doctor said something about my being so tired I didn't know it; but I am sure I never felt so much like working in my life. He told me to get out my notices for the school year and then take grandpa and go just where we both wanted to, for a solid ten days. Where shall it be?

August 25. — The doctor said I was not to be crossed in anything, so I decided to "do just what we both wanted to," *videlicet*, go home to Bellwood. I'm going to go and play in the graveyard everyday but Sunday, and make leaf-wreaths and take grandpa along for playmate, and likewise Don Quixote, if I can inveigle him up there, once in a while.

September 7. — Bellwood is a dear old heaven, and grandpa a false-toothed angel, and I a lazy good-for-nothing. I despise one thing here, however, — the sickening talk about my

trumpery new money. You would think I had become a magnifico. Just one person has spoken about its being good for grandpa, and just two have had the grace to say nothing about it at all, — one is Dr. Urquhart and the other is Don Quixote.

September 18, Harborside. — School opened day before yesterday, with more girls than ever; why, I can't guess. Nowadays I sleep like a statue and eat like a charity pupil. Dr. Urquhart said he wanted to turn my soul out of doors and give my body a chance; he seems to have done it, what with his cheery smile and his vicious, bitter, nondescript, compact, quintessential drug-store, a teaspoonful before meals.

October 4. — Waked up saying, "Oh, how suddenly are my works brought to confusion; they swiftly complain, and come to end!" — quite a biblical swing; A. W. among the prophets, and a sort of Jeremiah at that. But the only time I'm tempted to blueness, latterly, is when I think how much of life is taken with drudgery! The school-teacher leads a pack of youngsters a little way up a pleasant hill, and then goes back to the foot to start all over again. No climbing for one's self to far away summits; no long, daring journeys to lands of sunrise or moonset; nothing

but giving out one's personality. A tenth of the world leads, four-tenths are dragged, five-tenths fall by the way into the stagnant ditch. There's pessimism for you! I said I was going to make this wretched book a safety-valve. Of course I really know that grandpa, and cousin Lodema, and I, and Queen Victoria, and Doctor Urquhart, and wool-spinners, and all of us generally, have to keep at it. So do the glorious sun and the lazy moon; there is n't, thanks be to heaven, a moveless thing in the universe.

October 29.—Whom would I like to resemble? My mother, as I dream of her and believe she must have been, and is to-day, and will be when we meet; my grandfather, trying so bravely to be busy in doing nothing, and going daily to the public library to read and reflect concerning his newest axiom (his work is harder than mine); any brave, simple, self-sacrificing, unegotistic toiler,—say, for instance, a backwoods doctor in northern Michigan. I'd like to write a novel with an M.D. for the hero; the trouble would be to get a heroine; "helpmeets" are so flat and insipid. There are some people whom it is an inspiration just to *have* met, though you go your way and they theirs, and though, perhaps, they do not have the highest intellectual capacity. What

puts doctors into my head, I wonder? Because I have had so much to do with them this year, I suppose. Did Doctor Urquhart name his dog Don Quixote because he had read the book? I never knew that he was a "great reader," but one day he mentioned, quite accidentally, "Tristram Shandy," the "Religio Medici," "Rab and his Friends," "Walton's Lives," and "The Quarterly Review," — a curious lot. He seems to know more than he seems to — might give that sentence to my rhetoric class for correction. Here endeth, in this journal, stupid mentions of two persons, — one is myself and the other is grandpa's "medical adviser." Before dismissing him I wish to give him the credit, in this highly public manner, of making my life less lonely and my ideals a bit higher, these few months that he 's been a professional caller at our house, or rather our boarding-house and my house. Dear me, I never realized before that I don't live in Bellwood and do live in Harborside. There is the *I* again. Now for more important entries in this book, or none. Still, it was to be semi-personal, a tomb of my worst self. Never mind, I 'll let it be a Liberty Hall. A journal need not be consistent, particularly one that will never be read.

November 25, Thanksgiving. — I am thank-

ful, and thankful all through. This is a good world, and now I know it. And the best fun is this going out into others; what a fortunate pursuit is the teacher's. On a holiday one has time to think it all over. I believe I would not go back to a year ago if I could. I think grandpa was a bit dreary not to be in Bellwood, however, the first time in his life. He frets a little about being supported; I tell him I am beginning to pay back debts. Happy thought!—make him treasurer of the concern; I hate accounts. I will.

December 8. — Doctor U Some students are like the walls of the class-room,— the sound-waves of the teacher's voice strike them, and that is all.

December 22. — Sometimes you find in a stray corner of a newspaper that which is more to your life than many a dull chapter in a famous book. I read to-day a little story of a big dog, caught over night on an ice-floe on Lake Michigan. They could n't rescue him, and he could n't swim away, half frozen to the cake; so when the morning storm howled and a huge wave was blown toward his forlorn raft, he turned to the ice-blocks crashing upon him, gave a great, bold, defiant bark, as though he were quoting the line, "I can resist no more, but will not yield," and — died like a dog.

December 25. — Last night, Christmas eve, an aurora swirled in such a way as to make a great cloudy angel, with outstretched arms, spread wings, and long, floating drapery, — seemingly darting down to earth. Somehow I felt as though it meant my next year would be a bright one to me. The incredible and impenetrable stupidity of some of the girls is my greatest grief just now. If they were hateful I would not mind it, but amiable and willing brainlessness makes the teacher aweary, aweary. Yet external troubles are n't much when you are doing your best. Why was I so crushed last spring, then? Surely I had *meant* to do my best before all the awfulness happened.

January 8. — I dreamed last night that I met the Spectre of the Universe on the street corner, and it said: "Chant the dirge of defeat;" but I replied: "No, I will ring the Devil's knell, for Satan died when Christ was born;" and then I ran away as fast as I could.

February 4. — When things go worst then they go best, as the tired and thankful teacher knows very well, for right after you fail to get an answer to some such question as "What is the subject of Gray's Elegy?" the brighter pupils will cheer you by putting into their examination-books such bits of originality as these: "In the Puritan's view it was a sin to

listen to the birds singing ; " " Poe was a poet of the world between the living and the dead ; " " literature is not only the artistic expression of thought, but is the artistic expression of thought which has enduring value. Life, love, moral and religious truth — these are the most profound subjects of human thought."

What great moralists young people are ! Old ones, too often, get over it and quote Carlyle and Ecclesiastes. Grandpa, however, has a young head on old shoulders. I would like to quote some more things from this pile of literature-papers ; but I am keeping my notebook, not the schoolgirls'. That was not bad, though, a girl said in the class the other day when she called lyrical poetry the skylark of literature. My own poor little muse seems mortuary, and the happier I am the more my thoughts on awful subjects roll, damnation and the dead. Do I believe in damnation, I who was brought up among what the old country-woman called " High Church atheists ? " Indeed I do. Lovelessness is hell, and the law of cause and effect cannot be turned out of the moral world merely because sin cannot be weighed or virtue hypodermically injected.

February 27. — Spring is almost here, theoretically. What of it ? If immortality is true, the difference between age and youth amounts

to nothing; now is all. The pageant of the seasons, though, helps us toward minor happiness and bedecks our greater delights. Up north here, the twelve-month brings naught pleasanter than the first flying snowflakes of some Sunday in November; they suggest fire-light, and books and all pleasant things. I am half sorry winter is going. This spring I am going to think joy, and not keep saying "a year ago to day," as that dreadful anniversary draws near.

March 23. — Grandpa works every day on the Philosophy of Life, sometimes in the town library, sometimes prowling through the book-stores, and once in a while walking over to the seaside cliffs and cogitating there. He declares that a maxim a day is too much to write, on the average, and one a week a good se'nnights' task; I should think so; most people cannot philosophize quickly, or by measure. He likewise avers that the book, if it ever is brought out, shall be issued in blue paper-sided boards, leaves wholly untrimmed, with printed paper label on yellow cloth back. If so, I fear me it will find few purchasers, but who cares? Maybe, some time, years gone by, a stray reader will pick it up on the five cent sidewalk case and take it home, and say at length: "Here is a *book*." Most generations,

though, don't take much trouble to save that which their predecessors have not singled out. Every author, however, hopes that if buried, he may rise again; and then what a pleasure he gives his discoverer! If you are the only one who really appreciates a book and calls it great, why, then, how much wiser are you than anybody else.

March 24. — Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; very true, but it also delighteth the soul. I was writing about the Philosophy of Life yesterday. I verily believe its dear old author takes ten times the pleasure he would if it were all printed and bound. The slow scribbler makes his world at leisure, and revises it a dozen times before he sets it swinging through space. But what I was going to do, was to steal a few of his later maxims that have been really helpful to me in my work, and hopes, and struggles with melancholy, and transfer them to this journal. That's no theft, for he makes no secret of the great work now, and is so happy to feel that he aids the illustrious Amoret, — teacher, *arbiter elegantiarum*, poetess, heiress (think of it!). I must say that, putting laughing aside, I have got comfort of one sort or another — from spiritual strength to fun in my sleeve — out of the dear heterogeneousness of

these *mots*, *pensées*, maxims, wise saws and modern instances, dicta, proverbs, paradoxes, puzzles, orphicisms: —

O lover of life, does Life love thee?

There is such a thing as carrying good sense entirely too far.

Perfunctory "enjoyment" is the most melancholy thing in the world.

To have hated him was a religious education.

There is a moral element in nature's struggle for life.

Mere self-sacrifice God never asks; why, then, do Christians stick pins into themselves for his greater glory?

Do you doubt? look at the tinted cloud or the twilight ocean, and hear the song-bird at dawn.

The ideal is the ultimate real.

When fades and fails the inner light of any man's conscience, then for one soul eternity begins to dwindle.

That last is solemnly, beautifully true; life without it would be hideous gray chaos, while with it night is day, — but the wording is too preachy; I must tell grandpa to strike it out and let the one just before stand for both. We must allow people to work out their own thoughts, and not do their thinking for them.

April 1. — I have been offered \$30,000 for

this house — this “place,” as Chaucer would call it; and my lawyer advises me to sell. I suppose I ought to go on, from loyalty to cousin’s memory, but I am tired to-day, and homesick for Bellwood and Don Quixote. Somehow it seems to lower one to have to talk about money matters, especially when you have n’t earned one cent of the money. Grandpa says that is n’t so, and that the will expressly said I was the fit heir, by “proved competence and conspicuous discretion.” Cousin was partial. She thought of retiring herself in a year or two, though, and she once said the only property she cared to leave was her memory in the minds of those who knew her.

April 7. — Cutting from an article in the last number of *Days* : “Fiction, at its best, is the highest form of prose, because it delineates the ideal in terms of the real, or portrays the real and the local and the temporary in such fashion as to enable the reader, though of other times and places, to recognize in the printed page some touch of perennial art, some beautiful or noble portrayal of nature and human nature.”

May 1. — Grandpa has been home on a little visit, and for the last two days I have begrudged every minute of school time, I so

wanted to hear him tell it all over and over. Bellwood contains some pretty small timber, but it is big enough for downright, faithful, brave, cheery goodness in the daily toil, and morning joys, and evening sorrows of this world of ours. When one thinks of the way in which some people just go on and on, making life just a little better for their having existed that space of twenty-four hours, he fairly gets angry at mere vegetation and modern paganism, and declares that a good man or woman is the only decent thing in garret or palace. I am so tired of people who are always thinking about themselves that I half worship those who just do for others without even thinking about anybody at all. Don't they ever get tired? I do; I am too tired to re-read what I've just written; but I'm thankful to say that my enthusiasm is better than my rhetoric, and that I like to hear grandpa tell how some people are still making the sunlight the brighter on that dear old riverside hill. The two shops next north of our old one are to be rebuilt, with "mansard roofs;" dear me! Don Quixote had his leg broken last winter by a boy who threw an icy snowball, but he (D. Q.) had a splint made and soon got well, not lame a bit. I wish I could have bitten the boy in return; but I suppose

the mere dog felt the fault all his own in being just in line of the snowball.

May 15. — Is n't it pathetic to see the dun and dreary way in which people try to get out of the humdrum! Take their books, for instance. Grandpa and I had to make a call out in the country this afternoon, and I had the curiosity to note the intellectual resources of what the Canadians would call the "drawing-room" of the establishment. The house was not exactly a literary Sahara, but its few books had been gathered by the irony of luck. There was a huge "family Bible," the neglected fetich of the unwarmed parlor, resting on the chilling marble-top table in begilt grandeur. Grouped about it, in awkward attitudes hardly suggesting present use, were a subscription history of the United States, a "fringed" copy of an evangelical hymn, the Poems Sacred, Passionate, and Humorous of N. P. Willis, — a wedding present dated 1850 in the thin pointed chirography of the time, — an autograph album, and the inevitable collection of counterfeit presentments of family worthies, caught by the rural photography of the past three decades. Elsewhere, in a "what-not," were half a dozen text-books, neither very new nor very valuable, Holland's "Kathrina," "The Wide, Wide World," well worn, a few juveniles, ill-worn,

Gospel Hymns Number 2, and a campaign biography of Samuel J. Tilden.

July 1. — What an irregular thing a journal is! I have n't had a minute for making an entry since the school year began to draw — or rather to scurry — to a close. Everything went pretty well for the first year under a green hand, though I can see chances for improvement should I return and go on. Some advisers urge me to sell, even if I continue the school, as business is beginning to crowd on this street. Meanwhile, I have rented the old Andrew K. Ropes house in Bellwood, and we are going home for the summer, when I shall have plenty of time to think things over, — with two of my good domestics from this establishment to take the house care. I suppose Bellwood will think me a purse-proud aristocrat, inflated by new fortune; for up there one "help" is enough, and she sits at the same table. But grandpa and I are going to have a good rest this time, if we never do again. He is perfectly delighted to go back, and so am I, in a less degree; for I don't think it fair for everybody to leave the old sod to its fate as soon as he gets a little money or thinks his brains are beginning to sprout. We owe something to the soil that has raised us. Besides, there are one or two Bellwoodites I really would like to get to know better.

July 6, Bellwood.—Everything here is more beautiful than ever, and the scenery up and down the dear, treacherous river was never fairer. On the heights where I walked yesterday still lies repose, and a suggestion of peaceful twilight while the sun is full in air.

July 9.—Net profits of the school last year, after paying all expenses (including grandpa's and mine), \$648.12; not much for so hard work and such a big building, but tolerable for a beginning, or an ending. What I really have brought back from Harborside, however, is a sort of moral victory that is not included in the above "demnition total." I am no Pamela as a moral diarizer, nor do I expect to marry a missionary; but I am honest, I believe, when I say that I am learning that they live best who try to copy the life which *was* and which *gave*, the one because of the other. And it is all nonsense to say there are no Nazarenes nowadays: there are at least two right here in Bellwood.

Here endeth this diary,—I'm tired of it; *explicit liber, laus Dco.* I am going to burn it up in the big fireplace behind the hideous stove in the parlor. I want to see whether that north chimney will draw next winter, provided we plan to stay in the house.

XII.

THE WORLD ROLLS EASTWARD.

A MORET sat at the piano, in the swift twilight that followed a bright day of the next autumn. The night air was chilly; the elm trees were bare, most of the maples had lost their glory, and even the maroon of the oaks was quietly fading and falling. Within, a placid little wood fire minded its own small business on the reopened hearth of the big chimney. As the last notes were lingeringly struck, the music sank into Amoret's mind as a sort of summary of past experiences, and it was the most natural thing for her to pass into an easy mood of random retrospect.

She was again an inhabitant of Bellwood, and now, as she supposed, a permanent one. It had seemed better on the whole to sell the Tetley house; the teacher of French and the old German who came in from the town to instruct in modern languages had rented a smaller building, christened it the Tetley

School, and reopened it chiefly for day scholars; and so Amoret was free to do what seemed largest and best. Her grandfather's evident homesickness and her own pretty definite conclusion that charity might actually begin at home, had led her to buy the Ropes "mansion" of Bellwood's old ship-owning days, and begin life anew in the valley of her small girlhood. The quick possession of more or less money had not confused her wits or destroyed her habit of familiarity with the use of smaller revenues; and the purchase-money paid for the big house was but a third of its cost. Prudence, too, as well as poetic justice, lay in her plan to build on the site of the old publishing house a neat new little bookshop, a story and a half high, to be well stocked with wall-paper, pretty leather goods, a few etchings or lithographs of the better order, some illustrated magazines of which nobody need be ashamed, and one modest case of standard books. All this was for Mr. Welby, to whom idleness was now become irksome, in the restored health of a wiry septuagenarian, and who really felt that he could philosophize the better for some daily practical occupation. It would not be, thought Amoret, an expensive luxury, even with a boy clerk to help the happy old man,

who was delighted with the plan; while the unliterary miscellany would sell at least as well as formerly, and the few well-chosen books and etchings would accustom the community to the idea of a bookstore as it should be—an intellectual thermometer of the surrounding atmosphere. Mr. Welby consented, provided the pretty little architectural shop should be of brick, with wooden shutters, and should cost no more than three thousand dollars, he being permitted to give Amoret his note for the money. Thus the two had already begun to make their plans for its erection the moment the spring opened.

Mr. Welby, to whom planning ahead was as delightful as it was odious to Amoret, even determined to go to "the cities" in January to purchase stock; it was more than a dozen years since he had sat in King's Chapel or sipped his little toby of porter in Old Tom's, and these modest dissipations of a metropolitan trip were already beginning to rise pleasantly to mind, though he deceived himself with the thought that nothing but business was in mind. Besides, he might glance at the book-counters in the big shops and see how they were printing and binding really solid books nowadays; there was a good deal to be decided before the "Philoso-

phy of Life "could go to press, perhaps two or three years hence.

All this was talked over, for the dozenth time, at the tea-table that night; and after they returned to the fire-lit library, the minds of both still turned toward the future rather than the past. The early moon rose full, and the shadow of the big-paned window began to creep eastward across the floor before Amoret or Mr. Welby cared to light the lamp.

There was a ring at the door, and the white-aproned maid—an importation from Harborside — announced "Doctor Urquhart, ma'am."

"Capital, capital," said Mr. Welby, as he jumped from his chair and tripped to the door with both hands outstretched. "Here's the good doctor just for a friendly call, when neither Amoret nor I is sick."

"You should pay me as the Chinese do," said Dr. Urquhart; "for keeping you well, and stop the *quid pro quo* when you fall ailing."

"We would think of that," said Amoret, when she had given her greeting, "if you would nevertheless let us have the pleasure of your company once in a while, just to take note of things."

"Sit down by the fire, doctor," said the

old man, as he put on a fresh stick. "What with the blaze within and Luna without we'll get along very well."

"Moonlight is better than sunlight for social bats like me," said the doctor; "it's not often that I allow myself a luxury like this. My face looks queer away from a bedside, I fear me."

"You don't have the time, ah?" said the elder man. "Well, moonlight is a pretty good thing, even spiritual moonlight, for those that must struggle along nights as well as daytimes. Now take an hour's rest, doctor, for once in your life; you are out of the grind to-night, unless you've left word where you are."

"May I stay an hour, then?" said he. "Well, life does sometimes seem a wearisome grind, but I am most thankful for the grind; what would become of one if he had no regular duties?"

"Exactly," said Mr. Welby; "he would go into business again, as I am going to do."

"Really?"

"Yes, indeed, literally 'at the old stand.' And Amoret is going to start out in the world as general benefactrix, she says."

"She'll have enough to do," said the doctor, as he turned toward the picturesque

figure, half glowing and half shaded, by the farther corner of the fireplace; "enough to do without going out of Bellwood."

"I'll preach and you can practise," said she. "Or you can go around first and leave me to comfort the people afterward, and nurse them back to life."

"Good enough," said the doctor, with the hearty laugh of a man who is enjoying himself; "they need it."

"Well," said Amoret, with a tiny blush that nobody saw, "that belongs to the list of remarks one might have phrased otherwise; what I meant was—"

"Don't explain," said her grandfather; "you meant that when the doctor finished them they should n't be allowed to go to grass."

"If people would only go to grass," said the doctor, changing the subject, "it would be all right; but they go to poison-ivy."

"What a comfort it would be," said Amoret, comprehensively, "if everybody were perfect!"

"You are," was the doctor's boyish thought; but his manly lips said, more reservedly, "Perfection is what we are supposed to make our goal."

"And is n't it better," said Amoret, "that

we can strain our eyes out of the flicker and shadow to some distant glory like that great round moon over there! The child would n't be so happy, if it came tumbling into his lap when he cried for it, as you and I who are chasing it yet. Patient pursuit is better than sudden possession."

"And even more than that," said the doctor; "I sometimes think we like to lose a thing and then recover it to prize it the more for the loss. So we tumble out of innocence and climb to purity."

Mr. Welby had been going to say, "just as a cat lets a mouse run a little way off," but he politely forbore to jar on the doctor's last thought.

"A hard time certainly makes a good time all the more enjoyable," said Amoret.

"Surely you and Mr. Welby have earned your present comfort," said the doctor, who knew all their external troubles, and, with a medical man's insight, surmised that Amoret had turned Morland away, and then been sorely stung by his speedy death.

"Oh, no, we have n't; it came by luck of inheritance," said she. Somehow the doctor was the one person in Bellwood to whom she could talk absolutely freely, without fear of misunderstanding anywhere.

"But you approved yourself to Miss Tetley, as an individual, a relative, and a person of sense, I know."

"It would be nearer the truth to say that she didn't disapprove of me. But seriously, doctor, nobody knows half as much as you about men and things hereabouts, and I'm going to trouble you in all sorts of ways. See here," and she drew a bit nearer him, but fixed her gaze on the fire, and made small hills and valleys in the ashes. "Now this is our little secret, and you shall be our father-confessor. This money has come to us unsought, from a dear, good woman who saved it piecemeal in a hard life; and it's going to be managed just as a trust-fund for the public, especially for those who help themselves, or would if they could. Once for all, — for I don't want to talk about it, I want to do it, — I hate tramps, and professional beggars, and all that, and I fear me I don't really like the 'indigent poor,' or dirty-handed babies, or receptive missionaries, or Causes, or Societies to Promote this or that, or 'giving to the Lord,' or things you *ought* to want to help, but are really bored by. But I do like to do a little good in my own way, and I'm going to, and you will help, won't you?" and the little left hand brushed away the black hair

from the broad, low forehead that covered the brown eyes that blazed in the firelight.

Doctor Urquhart, to his amazement, discovered that this bright personality was the most interesting object in the world; and all kinds of supplementary thoughts rushed into his head, of which the mere joyousness of the fact that she lived in the same country and century with him was the chief. And Amoret thought to herself how good it was to have one person in the world who was only a friend, and who understood things; so there came again into her mind the pleasantness of such a free gladness of unsuspicuous companionship. Tired as she was of helping people, or drawing them out, or doing things lest she be misunderstood, Doctor Urquhart seemed to her merely a pleasant fact for which to be thankful.

“Indeed I will, if you will let me,” said he, and the whole future became radiant for him, what with this one thing to be in it.

“And we'll begin at Jerusalem,” said Amoret, “that is to say, with Thomas Welby, Esquire, Bibliopolist, who's to be director-general in the scheme.”

“I'll put in the prudence,” said that individual, “the doctor the tact and Amoret the money, which will be fair all round.”

"I don't see, then," said the doctor, "but that poor I must be the corner-stone of the new temple of philanthropy, for —

“‘ What boots it, thy virtue,
What profit thy parts,
If the one thing thou lackest,
The art of all arts.’ ”

“What do you suppose made him leave that out of his revised poems?” said Amoret; and each, from this tiny dialogue, thought to measure the extent of the other's reading and thinking.

“Doctor,” said the bookseller, “why is it that medical men are always so cheerful? Is it because the full life is the useful and therefore the happy one?”

“They are n't always,” said he, “but they ought to be. Melancholy helps nobody, but good cheer may. A moping doctor mistakes his calling as much as does a chattering one. To tell the truth, we poor fellows sometimes ache for a chance to groan, or to swear, or to tell all about it. Don Quixote knows how all the world wishes us to help them, and never stops to think or care whether we have headaches or our horses have surcingles;” and he turned his face toward Mr. Welby with a bright smile. Amoret noted that his

smooth-shaven face was round, tanned to a firm reddish-brown; his green eyes full of laughter; his well knit body neither short nor tall, just a hundred and fifty pounds of honest bone, muscle, and flesh; and that it was absurd that he should have a tiny bald spot, perfectly round, on the back of his head, and a gray patch above either ear.

"You look like a monk, doctor," said she, abruptly; "and so you must conquer your blasphemous propensities."

"You said I might be your father-confessor," said he, not quite liking the word, as he thought of it, "and here you are putting me on the rack. But I won't swear save before you or Don Quixote." There flashed into his mind the idea that he must change the subject before she thought of that dreadful confessional-box, where lay one swiftly dead; and so he said to Mr. Welby, "Life, not medicine or bookselling, is the thing, after all, is n't it?"

"Yes; and you might say not religion and not literature, either; ethics is the one thing that makes a man."

"What a dreadful confession for an author to make!" said Amoret.

Mr. Welby had never heard himself called an author before, and was visibly flattered.

"I mean," said he, "that books are so often hollow."

"Yours won't be," said she, determined that his little secret, as well as hers, should be shared.

"May I ask what—"

"No, no, no, no! not quite yet," said the philosopher cheerfully; "I've set a few marionettes of ideas against the background of life, and perhaps I'll pull their strings for you some day."

Amoret, however, thought the cosy time just suitable for a few bits of the Philosophy, since the talk of the three friends had run on themes so varied; so she got the water-soaked book that had played such a part in the melodrama of that night of loss and rescue. No great persuasion was needed to induce Mr. Welby to turn the warped leaves, nor was the reading of some stray bits long postponed. As the old man read, the doctor felt that he was getting acquainted with some new tracts of the bookseller's brain; Mr. Welby himself was in a happy mood betwixt modesty and vanity; while for Amoret, the enjoyable moment was enough.

Do you repent? then do not, but do.

"That isn't worded plainly," thought the reader.

Of the A B C of life we know nothing.

Shakespeare is intellectual rather than spiritual. He seems to have been afraid of the future life.

“Do you think so?” said Amoret.

“Have you a right to read his characters into himself?” added the doctor.

“No, certainly not,” said Mr. Welby; “but there is a prevalent drift in plots and characters, and we know he wrote the sonnets.”

“You see,” said Dr. Urquhart, “we pay your book the compliment of aroused dissent; it is n’t every writer who can start other minds a-working. We don’t *love* Shakespeare, surely.”

Mr. Welby smiled, readjusted his glasses, and went on, Amoret meanwhile tucking down his cravat, which had risen above the back of his dickey. The philosopher did not notice either evil or remedy.

Why should we rejoice that a good man has gone to enrich paradise? The longest life is a speck in eternity, and we needed him here.

“Grandpa is a heretic, you see.”

Noblesse oblige: the Whig Arian can afford to be tolerant.

We miss the unregions of the seen more than the regions of the unseen.

"I wonder what that means?" thought both.

Let not the tragedy of the old world be followed by the farce of the new.

The great genius shows a large sanity in his calm superiority over the conventional; he shuns placid unideal content that he may rise to the true calm of a life for others.

"There's a good deal in that," said the doctor to Amoret. "It's all nonsense to say that genius is insanity and commonplaceness a mark of mental soundness."

A man's talk should be quiet, gentle, and clear-cut, and not much of himself.

"But a bird is noisily egotistic," said Amoret, to which her grandfather added the demonstrable statement that "A man is n't a bird."

Make not self-renunciation a shriveling.

How small a stone will cause a stumble.

The three parts of salvation: stop; begin; continue.

There is nothing in the animal world so interesting as the attachment of animal dog to animal man.

"Good," said the doctor; "I'm glad you put in a word for Don Quixote."

"The other day," quoth Amoret, "Judge Bennett said: 'Old Jenkins is dead, and not

a soul in town cares, not even his wife.' 'Oh, yes,' said Gertrude, quick as a flash, 'his little brown dog does.' "

"Miss Bennett is a bright girl," said the doctor. "By the way, speaking about dogs, did I ever tell you how Don Quixote's father departed this life? He was a handsome fellow, of a reserved and dignified disposition, who took it for granted that the world would make way for his self-centred movements, as it generally did. He'd lie down in the middle of the road and wait for carriages to turn out, as a matter of course; but once, when he was sitting on a railroad track enjoying the morning breeze, the unexpected happened. He was as unsophisticated as a noisy sparrow that kept up its chittering outside my bedroom window for a whole May month, — once I threw a stone at it, but it didn't know what stoning meant, and continued its alleged song as cheerfully as ever. I was the one that was ashamed."

"The poor dog!" said Amoret, oblivious of the sparrow.

"But dear me," said Doctor Urquhart, "I ought n't to be interrupting in this way."

"Your talk is more interesting than mine," pleasantly retorted Mr. Welby, as he went on: —

Nothing seems so important to man as the things he forgets ; so the missing of heaven will be the depth of hell.

Follow the trend of truth, and the pace of God, and let the past path fade ; for the great wholesome world turns on.

Oh, the books we 've never written, and the songs we could not sing.

"Why, that 's poetry," said Amoret.

"So is the next one," said he :

Work in work-time,
Play in play-time,
Worry at no time.

"No, it is n't," said she.

"But it 's uncommon sense," said the doctor. "Say it over again ; I want to remember it, to put it over my office desk."

As we do not remember when we did not live, we seem to have lived forever.

Catch but the real meaning of "I am," and you are a son of God.

Right things abide, though they hide.

"But I must stop this random leaf-turning, or I shall send you both to sleep. The fault of these poor jottings, I fear," added the old man, "is that they look too fixedly within. Introspection has filled more insane asylums

and made more unhappy homes than anything that can be called a good."

"So it has," said Doctor Urquhart; "but I kept thinking of myself all the time you were reading, not of you; I am sure *you* are helpful rather than introspective."

"I think so, too," said Amoret; "his book has really helped me in sad or weary times, until it has fairly made me a cheerful philosopher again, in spite of myself, just as I used to be when I was a little girl."

"And have been ever since," testified her relative.

"It's a good thing to have such thinkers as you watching us men in the working world," said the doctor. "When I was a little boy in the old church, I used to think a small ventilating-hole in the ceiling was to let angels look through to see if the minister was preaching right; and it was a solemnizing reflection when it flashed over me, one Sunday afternoon, that perhaps they might turn their eyes on me occasionally." And he rose to go.

"Grandpa is our angel," said Amoret.

"She said our," thought the doctor, ninety minutes later, as he went to his stable to say good-night to Don Quixote and the pale horse Mors.

The joy of winter!

On some clear October afternoon there is a chill in the air; frost impends over the weather-wise; potted geraniums are brought into the house, and belated tomatoes are sheeted in white, as though mimicking the irregular snow-heaps so soon to come. Next morning roof and lawn sparkle in a thin sprinkling of crystals, the scarlet runners hang limp beside the kitchen door, the ferns on the bank are black and unsightly, and the few last withered elm leaves drop crookedly and clumsily to earth. Next noon the sunshine is so warm as to make one think of May-time; but as the early twilight falls there is a clearness of cloudless sky that foretelis a repetition of the portent of winter. Then in November, when the shallowest pools and the tub under the rain-spout are skimmed with brittle glass, and the sky has been overcast for twenty-four hours, one first sees a stray snowflake sailing horizontally against the blackness of the open barn-door, and another, and another, and the snowstorm has begun. Soon appear the sleds, and the youngsters try to coast on the inch-covering of the stiffly frozen grass, into which the runners helplessly sink. Out in the shed are two barrels of cider, with straw around their wooden bungs,

and a bulge of white fizzles through the air-hole near by, if the plug be loose. Strings of corn hang high on the wall, the pumpkins are piled in the corner, the cellar is banked up, and the evening lamps shine early out upon the dim slopes.

But just before night of some short December day, when the river is closed and the hills are mottled with gray and green and some new patches of dirty white, the snow begins in earnest, and falls and falls into three feet of its own accumulated softness, not wholly to be lost before April. Or in January a new storm drapes every twig and herb with a white covering, against which stand the black boles of the elms or the smooth silences of the young beeches. Twig, fence-rail, hayfield, and sheeted pond sparkle in one multiform glory, which Amoret makes the radiant mirror of the not less serene pleasures of her own heart.

For now was the winter of her content. The fact was that she had somehow become, of late, a little girl again. Student and teacher in the university of life, once sorrow-stricken and shamed by the lurid vision of a lost soul, she had grown backward to some simple, childlike acceptance of things. Doubts regarding her failure or responsibility toward

Rodney and Morland had faded before a new inner sense of attempted duty done. Had her own attitude been other, day by day, in those other times, she knew she would have been disloyal to truth and love, all for the sake of standards not her own, and far enough, she felt, from those of the men and women who make the world really worth living in. Nature itself is not inexorable or false; and she would have been both had Rodney's easy-going epicureanism or Morland's new morality of individualism taken the place of what she felt to be of lovely trend. Once that winter, indeed, she wrote a friendly letter to Rodney, and his reply, half hopeless and half cheery, showed at least that there was no poorest semblance of love on either side, but maybe, even yet, some tiny chance of friendly helpfulness on hers.

And she took things for granted, that was all, in a joy sometimes quiet and sometimes almost rollicking. She was meant, she declared in a not unkindly anger, to be good and happy; and how could she really be one if not the other? Even her money, of which she was neither ashamed nor proud, was some comfort; it enabled her to go on without worry for her grandfather, and to let him live where he wished and as he had; while for

the rest, there was enough unselfishly to do with it, goodness knew. What had once laughingly been called her profession of benefatrix, interpreted as it was by herself, gave her due occupation. Why should n't one be, said she to herself, and do on the basis of being, just like a flower or a star?

But what of Doctor Urquhart? Simply this: he found, right by him in Bellwood, in indubitable flesh and blood, the ideal which he had always worshipped, but never thought to see with open eyes — save, as he admitted one day, that he had dreamed of his goddess of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good as having an absolutely straight nose. And Amoret? From mere tacit enjoyment of the doctor's talk and cheerily wholesome presence she had turned to two moods of a much more definite sort. First, she thought of him as the only one in the world whom she could endure to have always around; and then she came to reflect, to her amazement, and at first to her tiny vexation, that her world would actually be lovelier if he were always near than if he were not — she, to whom all others, even her grandfather, had sooner or later seemed somewhat obtrusive. Each, indeed, thought of the other as the one person in existence to whom the words Pleasant

Friend might apply in all resplendent truth, and winsome enjoyment, and cheery struggle, and picturesque vicissitude and indispensable helpfulness, forever and a day.

If Doctor Urquhart had been a smaller man than he was, he would have been annoyed that Amoret had a country fortune, and he but a house, and barn, and horse, and dog, and receipts for his debts, and naught but one modest savings-bank account beside. And if Amoret's soul had been a smaller one, she would have wished that he might go to some larger town, there to be freed from the black midnights and pauper tyranny of a country doctor's life. But, next to the fact that she had come to feel toward him, in all sincerity, the three words *I like you*, there had grown in her mind a conviction, at first rather unwelcome, that bright, heartful, helpful goodness was better, if you must choose, than cold mentality. The books, to be sure, had piously said just that again and again, and Amoret had despised their preachments. What conquered her prejudices against mere goodness — at first she had thought the doctor humdrum — was the discovery that, in him at least, calmness was not a loss of enthusiasm but a gain of tranquillity; that in life, as in nature, simplicity is beauty; and that a soul

can combine the idle glow of a summer's noon with the force of all perfect things that merely act as they must, without waste of time or strength. Once Amoret told him she would have loved him as much if he had been a woman. "Would you me if I had been a man?" she added; and he replied, "I don't know."

When did this love-friendship begin? Neither could tell. When did it end? Never. When did either first speak of it? It would not be easy to answer even that question; but perhaps one day of springtide localized it as truly as any.

Amoret, that Thursday, was minded to take an early morning walk to the hilltop; for now that her time was her own, the sunrise and she were frequent friends. As she climbed the familiar path day grew slowly, great clouds rolled majestically up from the horizon, and the wet grass and young leaves caught enough light to glisten in. The sky was all pale gold when she reached the top and looked down on the village, which lay hushed under the blessing of dawn. Lighter and brighter grew the day, the sky flushed all over a rosy hue, and the rim of the sun rose above the horizon beyond the river. Then it grew clear and full in the fresh morning air; the

branches swayed rhythmically to and fro in the freshening breeze; every blade of grass, tipped with its pearly drop, nodded and bowed to its neighbor; while the robins sang blithely as they flitted about. It was a new heaven and a new earth, and the little hills were joyful together before the Lord.

In her dawntide delight, Amoret felt utterly at one with nature; it was a part of her, she of it. Through the veil of things she seemed to see some of the secrets of being. Stooping to pluck a dandelion, she stopped at the remembrance of an old-time fancy that flowers lived as truly as she, and that she must n't hurt them by tearing them from their stalks. Anyway, there was a certain something within her that told of the rightness of joy, of the love of love and of life, of the beautifulness of being. In her mood, her childish dreams had all come true, for she was a child again; but more, if the strength of knowledge were as simply true as the innocence of inexperience.

All the way down the hill, when she started home, there were plenty of pleasant things, — so pleasant that she enjoyed them every one in anticipatory memory: a cat and four kittens playing in and out of a little hole at the foot of the big elm in old Diantheya

Blynman's back yard; a queer, lonely, suspicious bird flying in and out of the lilac bushes in front of the Kitfield house — Amoret was sure the bird's name must be the skulk; a big dog sitting contentedly by some daffodils, as though he had a bit of æsthetic sense of their straight loveliness, or at least some physical pleasure in the pleasant environment. He made her think of Don Quixote, who, she was sure, was a moralist, whether or not he was an artist.

Before she knew it, she turned her free feet toward the graveyard, now bright in the sun and breeze and song of the birds. And it was Don Quixote that found her there and ran bounding up in a hurry to get as much of her time as he might, without losing more of his master's society than he must. The welcome was hilarious on either side, for both, though they did not know it, were too happy to enjoy loneliness for long.

Doctor Urquhart had been going along on the other side of the street, and was puzzled that all his whistling for Don Quixote was in vain, for it was not usual for that evolved representative of age-end dogdom to be oblivious alike to the sanctity of grave grass and to the ethics of obedience. The reason was soon apparent, for the happy dog and happy

girl became audible as well as visible under the thickly crowded pines that made a forlorn square around the Rotherwell tombstones.

When the doctor walked briskly across with a "May I come, too?" Amoret turned around in a queer disorder: hat wrongside before, hair in eyes, teeth all a-laughing, and two great mud marks left by Don Quixote's eager feet on the front of her fuzzy plaid dress.

"Oh, good," said the girl; "now the whole world's here."

"Till death do us part?" said the doctor, hat in one hand, small medicine case in other, a curious little tremor in his jolly voice, a strange bit of confident hope in his happy glance.

"Death does n't end all," said Amoret, and wondered what she was saying, and why.

"Forever," said the doctor. He caught her hand, and his soul flew out in a little kiss, which Amoret dodged, though her hand stayed captive. But the kiss just grazed her cheek, a humming-bird on the wing.

Don Quixote was visibly puzzled, but his attention was distracted, just then, by a scurry through the granite gate-posts of the graveyard. It was a boy, running up all breathless and dusty, to say, between his gasps, "Oh, doctor, come right off, little Jimmy

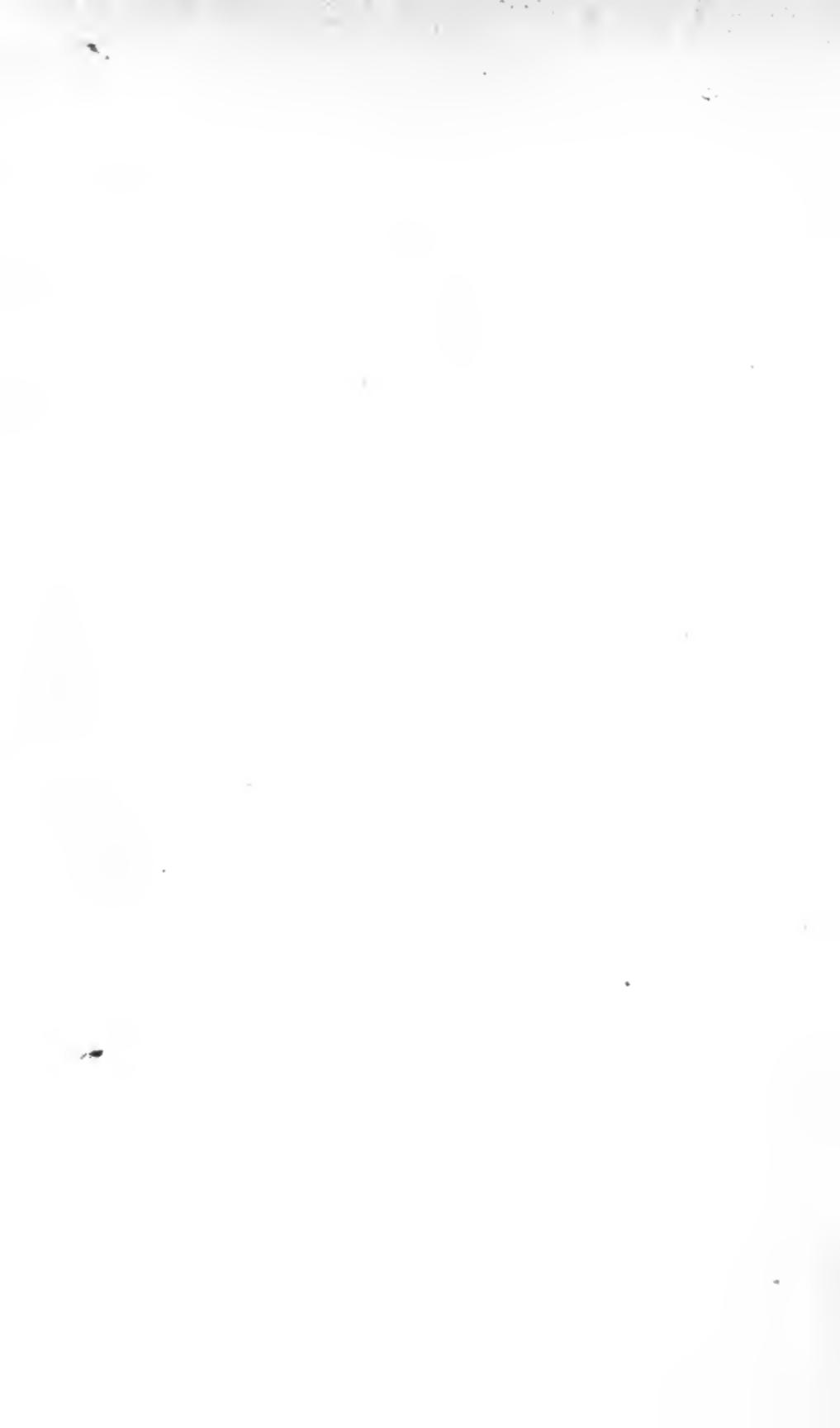
Nelligan's a-broken his leg, and they found where yer was, and he's a-howlin' awful, and I've been a-chasin' yer everywhere."

The doctor went, and so did Don Quixote, after an afflicting period of indecision marked by drooping ears, squat haunches, and a pathetic interrogation-mark in either eye. Duties may never conflict, but pleasures do.

They were all gone, save she who was left alone in her childish playground, among the trees and the graves she knew and loved so well. She looked down the gravelled roadway until she saw Don Quixote gallop southward in an abrupt right angle at the gate, at length accepting his immediate future with an alacrity that he apparently deemed not inconsistent with the bygone regret of ten seconds before. Then she climbed on the slab of the Bexley tomb, and unconsciously dangled her feet as of yore.

"And this is the end of the beginning," said Amoret.

THE END.









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